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**BETWEEN INTEGRATION AND SEGREGATION.
A DIALECTIC VIEW OF THE USE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE
BY THE BULGARIAN COMMUNITY IN VALLADOLID (SPAIN)¹.**

ABSTRACT. Modern cities are composed of a large range of different cultural groups which contributes all together to the creation of the urban scenery. Migrants can be considered as one of the most visible cultural groups in the town. In the case of Valladolid, the Bulgarian community is the biggest migrant community. They started to arrive at the beginning of the XIst Century, and now are one of the most integrated collective in the town.

In this paper I will explore the role of Cultural Heritage in the making of the town, and its relation with the integration process of a migrant community. I will describe how the management of Cultural Heritage becomes a way of empowerment of the group. Through participation in the different rituals, the local and migrant groups develop a sense of belonging that lays the ground for the process of the making of the city.

First of all, I will consider two simultaneous processes: the important role of Cultural Heritage in the group definition and the importance of the group definition in the management of the Cultural Heritage. This will allow offering a kind of classification of the different rituals of Valladolid according to the participation of migrant people.

Secondly, I will discuss the relationship between the management of Cultural Heritage and the participation in the city life. This participation will help comprehend the dialectical process between the integration and segregation of migrants in relation to their management of Cultural Heritage. The higher the participation, the stronger the boundaries of the group. Strong boundaries should be understood within the discourse of cultural difference. Such a discourse can turn into a segregation process. Hence, integration should be regarded along with segregation.

Thirdly, I will examine how the participation in the management and performance of some rituals is a way to take part in the process of the making of the town. The management of Cultural Heritage has a big influence on the process of emergence of new meanings for the urban space. The centre and the periphery are continuously redefined by the action of the social subjects living in the town. Migrants can take part in this process through their participation in the different rituals along the year.

Cultural Heritage

In the last decades, Cultural Heritage has become an important object of reflection not only for anthropologists, but also for many other experts from

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different cultural sectors. Step by step, the interest in this field has been growing, developing an important conceptual strategy to analyze and study this area of knowledge. At the beginning of the XXIst Century, the distinction between Material and Intangible Heritage turned important, being the main topic of discussion. As a result, the concept of Cultural Heritage is now referred not only to objects (such as ethnographical objects, pieces of arts and handicraft), but also to traditions and the knowledge related to them (UNESCO 2003).

This approach also includes the people involved in the making of the different traditions, rituals and objects, focussing the attention on the sustainability of their way of life. These people are not only the subjects who preserve heritage, but also the subjects who transform, reinterpret, and remake it. As traditions are invented (HOBSBAWM 1983), the material heritage is also reinvented day after day. Even if objects seem to have a more stable conformation than rituals and traditions, their importance and meanings are shaped day after day by the action of subjects. Cultural Heritage refers to a community in which it gains importance and meaning and, at the same time, it shapes the borders of the community itself.

Therefore, Cultural Heritage, in its many different forms, allows exploring the group construction process (HANDLER 1998, LINNEKIN, 1983 #101). It turns especially important when referred to a migrant group which tries to build itself within the new community. In most cases, a big amount of cultural

material is displaced and reinterpreted according to the new position the group has taken in the host society in its attempt to gain a better place in the social space. The preservation, management and performance of Cultural Heritage are closely related to the self-notion of the migrant community. Such a notion is also linked to the local community management of identity and originates a new form of understanding of the groups by both sides.

Material and Intangible Heritage are closely related to the group identity construction. In both cases, objects and practices develop a special meaning, gaining a new place in the core of the definition of the group. Those objects and practices could be found in other groups without any kind of special role for the community. Hence, what turns an object or a practice into Cultural Heritage is the symbolic appropriation made by the community. This central role is recognized not only by the community, but also by the surrounding communities in a broader cultural stage.

In this paper, attention is focussed on the Intangible Heritage of the Bulgarian Community settled in Valladolid. First and foremost, ritual will be considered as one of the most representative practices in the community making. According to Rappaport (RAPPAPORT 1999), ritual can be considered as one of the most important facts in the making of humanity, i.e., community. His broad fieldwork on rituals included not only religious rituals, but also many other civic rituals that occur in a contemporary town. He stressed that a ritual

contributes to the construction of the community, to the emergence of hierarchy, and to the self-interpretation of the group. The performance of the ritual becomes a deliberative action of the group, forced by tradition, which allows exploring the group boundaries and the group construction.

Ritual proves to be powerful in the collective identity management. Hence, to be able to define and determine how a ritual should be performed becomes an important source of social power. Ritual also enforces the links between individuals, leading to the emergence of a social network which lays the ground for the group construction. It provides the person with a potential range of weak ties, which can be enforced by the personal action. It provides the person with a sense of belonging to the community. By the performance of the ritual, the group itself will be assembled. The relationships between the group and other different groups will be also shown in the performance of the ritual.

With particular reference to this case study, the Bulgarian Community settled in Valladolid takes part in the performance of different kinds of ritual along the year. Since they are a long settled and good integrated community, they play an active role in the different rituals which contribute to the making of the city as a complex of social relationships. For analytical purposes, I will consider three kinds of rituals: (i) Bulgarian Rituals, (ii) Local Rituals (iii), Merging forms. This classification should be understood as an analytical tool

which allows understanding the continuum that characterizes the real social life of the city.

(i) **Bulgarian Rituals.** This group includes those rituals the Bulgarian community performs for itself. They are the Bulgarian traditional rituals supposed to be played by the former community in Bulgaria. The participation in this kind of ritual is related to the belonging to the migrant community. Hence, it is important for the reinforcement of the ties within the community. It plays an important role in the group identity definition because it stresses the cultural difference between the Bulgarian community and other groups settled in the town. This group comprises the celebrations of the scholar festivities at the Sunday school, the Marteniza, the folk dances exhibitions, and the celebration of the Day of Bulgarian Alphabet.

Those rituals can be found among the Bulgarian Communities settled in many other countries (KARAMIHOVA 2010). Hence, they can be considered important for the Bulgarian migrant groups in many other places. On the other hand, their importance in the current social life of Bulgaria is hard to define. In the last two decades, they have lost their main place in the social scenery, remaining as nostalgic celebrations only for a few members of the community. As it happens in many other migrant groups, Bulgarian migrants are stressing some of their particular traditions to emphasize their cultural peculiarity. The

performance of rituals plays a crucial role in the group definition by pointing out its difference and reinforcing the group boundaries.

(ii) **Local Rituals.** This group includes the rituals and festivities the town celebrates in an official way, such as the Eastern Processions, the Main Festivity of the Holy Virgin of St. Lorenz, or the Main Festivity of St. Peter Regalado. Those rituals express the identity of the town which celebrates the very old tradition of each of those events. The appeal to tradition becomes relevant to justify the celebration and performance of the different rituals, even if some evident changes have occurred (i.e. less than 20 years ago, the Main Festivity of the Holy Virgin of St. Lorenz was the St. Mathieu celebration). Those rituals and festivities are performed by the local population for the local population. Many different collectives are involved as social actors, creating a space for social communication where the symbols managed in the ritual make sense. These rituals are organized in a high hierarchical way, with local authorities playing a decision-making role.

Foreign people can participate in those rituals. Actually, their participation is expected, but they are far from the power position. As the Bulgarian community is highly integrated within the local society, the participation of its members in these rituals occurs at an individual level. Most of them take part in different activities and enjoy the many amusements offered in those periods as

regular citizens rather than as migrants or Bulgarians. The town is a social complex where the sense of belonging and the right to participation are not so strongly defined. The town boundaries are hard to define. Hence, people from many different social groups can find their place in the town's rituals.

(iii) **Merging Rituals.** This group includes the rituals made by the local authorities specifically for the migrant population. The importance of migration in the city life has increased in the last twenty years. It has reached a critical point where the local authorities have started to develop specific programmes for migration. In the last decade, these programmes have been oriented to the inclusion of migrants in the city. They have tried to improve the participation of the migrant population in the city life. The local authorities have created a set of new rituals and festivities specifically directed to the migrant population, where its participation is expected through the migrant associations settled in the town. Those rituals and festivities are considered as “merging rituals” because they are neither migrant rituals (because they do not refer to any real concrete migrant society), nor local rituals. They are new rituals planned by the locals, performed by the migrants, in order to show their different cultures to the whole society. That is why the term “merging ritual” is used.

In Valladolid, the Intercultural Week, the Carnivals, and the International Festival are also celebrated. The performance of these festivities is carried out

by the different migrant associations. Migrants can participate on an individual level, like the local population, but, in order to play a major role, they need to be engaged in one of those associations. In the case of the Bulgarian community, the three Associations settled in the town take part in the different events. The Bulgarian Association Stara Planina plays an important role in the different rituals because it is the only association which has a dance group and enough members to carry out activities.

Cultural Heritage, both material and intangible, is a symbolic construction that expresses the identity of the community. The intangible heritage, specifically rituals and festivities, becomes a place which provides the person with a set of social ties, a social network where the ritual develops its meanings, transforming the self-perception of the group. The meanings of the Cultural heritage are not fixed but change with the performance over time. While the migrant communities are taking part in the performance of the ritual, they are also taking part in the process of the definition of the town. The different rituals presented above are only a theoretical approach to understand a changing reality. The importance of the different rituals is not a fixed position, but a process of negotiation between the different social actors. In this process, the local scenery is defined marking the boundaries of the local group as well as those of the different migrant groups. The successful integration of the Bulgarian community

in daily life can also be found in their successful participation in the performance of the ritual.

Performance and participation: between integration and segregation

The rituals and festivities are at the basis of the social group, providing the person with a big range of social ties that link one to each other. They are important facts that represent the social life of the town. Hence, the participation in such events can be regarded as a way of integration in the social complex that makes the city. As to the classification mentioned above, the Bulgarian Rituals and the Merging Rituals are the most interesting for this research. Since the participation in the local ritual is only in an individual way, its analysis will exceed the purpose of this paper. Therefore, in the following pages, integration and segregation through cultural heritage will be analyzed by taking into account Merging and Bulgarian Rituals.

Those different kinds of ritual share a set of common characteristics that allow further analysis. First of all, in both cases, an important difference concerning the participants should be pointed out. It is possible to consider the individual participation besides the group participation. However, groups have a higher degree of agency and play the main roles in every event. For this reason, rituals and festivities will be considered from a group point of view. These groups, understood as social actors, are the subjects that perform the different

rituals, in both the Bulgarian and Merging rituals. The various Bulgarian Associations in the town are the subjects which organize and perform the different events. For example, in the celebration of the Carnivals, the different migrants of the town take part in the performance of the opening march, always as members of migrant associations. In this festivity, the agency lies on the local authorities, but they take into account the proposals from the different participating collectives. Even the local people involved in this festivity take part through the “peñas”, associations arranged for the main festivities of the town that also start to play some roles in other events along the year. Belonging to an association allows the person to play a main role in the ritual. Somehow, belonging to an association means belonging to and having the right to participation in the social life of the town, just as, in a clan-based society, belonging to a kinship group means belonging to the society.

Secondly, besides the different associations involved in it, the performance of the ritual entails the potential participation of many other people in a varying extent. The performance of the main activities and roles is reserved only for those collective subjects belonging to associations. However, as it occurs with many other festivities and rituals in the town, they are directed to an unspecified range of different people who take part in many different ways, i.e. as simple spectators, tourists, or possible participants in some concrete events in the ritual. In the last decades, Cultural Heritage, particularly the Intangible Heritage, has

become a source of tourism (KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLETT 2004). Hence, the performance of a ritual has also gained a tourist meaning, which implies that it should be adapted to the modern society so that it can be understood by a big variety of different people, not necessarily related to the local context.

In the case of the celebration of the Carnivals, it is evident that the opening march would not make any sense without the big amount of spectators surrounding the different collectives which perform the ritual. In this case, as the local authorities have the highest degree of agency in the ritual organization and in the decision-making process, they are the most interested in the attendance of spectators and tourists. The Bulgarians asked about the Carnival celebration spoke proudly about the group of the association Stara Planina they had formed to take part in the Opening March, because it was bigger than those of other associations. At the same time, the local authorities showed a big interest in its success as a tourist event for the rest of the city, not paying so much attention to the particular attitudes of the concrete and different associations.

This potential integration of the others as spectators is also found in the “Bulgarian Rituals” performed by and for Bulgarians, such as the Marteniza. This is a traditional festivity which marks the end of winter and the beginning of spring, which is celebrated on March 1st. In this performance, many Bulgarian nationalistic elements are also included because March 3rd is the most important National festivity in Bulgaria (BORISOVA 2012). The Bulgarian people settled

in Valladolid celebrate both festivities together. The festivity is arranged and managed by the Bulgarian Association Stara Planina, hence they are the people with the higher degree of agency. They arrange a concert and exhibitions of traditional Bulgarian dances, performed by the dance group of the association. However, they also make a big effort to include many other people. On the one hand, many Bulgarian people, who do not belong to the association, attend the event as spectators. On the other hand, they also try to include the local population and other migrant groups. They formally invite the local authorities and the management of other migrant associations in the town. The whole event is held in Bulgarian and in Spanish so that it can be understood by everyone. When they speak about the organization of this festivity, they consider the good performance of the different dances just as important as the attendance of a big range of different people as spectators. Hence, the influence of tourism on the cultural heritage can also be seen in the case of the migrants' cultural heritage.

As shown above, the Bulgarian participation in the rituals and festivities of Valladolid occurs through the Bulgarian Associations. These associations act as collective social actors and have a different degree of agency according to the different kind of rituals. The participation of the Bulgarian Associations in the different rituals and festivities of the town is considered quite important by their members. They point out that it is the way they have started to make them visible at the local level. Their participation in the festivities and rituals

reinforces their position among other migrant associations and allows them to keep in touch with the local authorities, which, on the one hand, arrange the merging festival and, on the other hand, attend the Bulgarian Festivals as guests. In this sense, it is clear that the participation of the Bulgarian Associations in the different rituals and festivities is a way to integrate these associations within the local social system. Hence, belonging to an association is a way to take part in such events, integrating the different individuals at the local level. The position of the group would gain a better position for the individual. However, this position is not a reached static point, but a process of negotiation that comprises also the segregation of the group.

As a social group, in this case a Bulgarian Association, gets a better and stronger position among other groups in the town scenery, it gains more visibility. The Bulgarian group reinforces the social ties inside itself, which also means the reinforcement of the group boundaries. If its boundaries are reinforced, the group appears more differentiated in the social complex of the town, highlighting that its members are different and migrants. Such differentiation enhances the potential danger of the segregation of the whole community, because the maintenance of boundaries stresses the difference between the local “we” and the foreign “others”. The management of the Cultural Heritage becomes especially important as a source of identity discourses in the process of integration and segregation performed at the local

level. It is important to broaden the view of the management of the Cultural Heritage by the migrant groups so as to include this dialectical process. Thus, the management of the Cultural Heritage can be a successful strategy in the reinforcement of the group since it helps it gain a better position for itself and its members. At the same time, it stresses the group boundaries, sustaining the cultural difference (STALLAERT 2004).

This paradox of the participation in the rituals is perceived by the Bulgarian community. Most of the Bulgarian people settled in Valladolid do not belong to any association and participate in the Bulgarian or Merging Rituals only as simple spectators. When they are asked about this fact, they answer that they want to be integrated in the local society and, for this reason, they prefer doing the “regular local activities instead of the Bulgarian ones”. They stress that they appreciate their own culture and try to teach it to their children but in a private sphere, because they do not want their children pointed out as “Bulgarian” throughout their life. For this people, Cultural Heritage remains as a place for nostalgia rather than an active strategy of performance of the social life.

Cultural Heritage plays an important role in the community identity definition. The Intangible Heritage, especially rituals and festivities, allow exploring the right to participation as well as the core of the identity of the different groups. Its performance becomes important for the reinforcement of the group and integrates different groups which play different roles in the

different events. This way, migrant groups, such as the Bulgarians, can find a way to participate in the social life of the town. If this participation succeeds, the group and its boundaries will be reinforced. This stresses the cultural difference, being at the same time a source of segregation. The management of the Cultural Heritage plays a major role in the process of group position between integration and segregation.

The making of the town

A modern town is a complex of different people with many different cultural backgrounds who use the urban space and develop a kind of common trends in the social life, making a social complex. Space is more than a physical dimension. It has a symbolic dimension that turns important to understand the life of the town. This symbolic dimension is not static, but it is the result of a continuing negotiation between the different groups and subjects settled in the town. In this sense, the town is always in a making process, in which different social actors take part.

One of the ways to take part in the city making is through the management of the Cultural Heritage. The performance of the different rituals along the year changes the meaning of the different streets and squares integrated in the town. On the one hand, some places are important for the community, since they have a special relevance for the local people. The rituals performed in those places

receive this relevance and become meaningful for the people. On the other hand, some places, which are of no special interest for the local traditional point of view, can become relevant through the performance of some important rituals. In this case, it is the ritual that gives a symbolic meaningful dimension to the places. As a result, it can be suggested that ritual and social space have a feedback relationship, as they transform each other by the action of the social subjects. Hence, the social space, as well as the performance of the different rituals, is always involved in a process of continual transformation.

As to this case study, it is possible to observe that the Bulgarian community takes also part in the making of the city by participating in the different rituals and festivities. Regarding the Bulgarian Rituals, they show a clear will to reach central places for their performances. Even if these rituals are firstly directed to the Bulgarian Community, the Bulgarians have early understood their importance to make the community visible. For this reason, they claim for better places for their performances. Hence, in the last years, they have got better places in more central areas, while, in the early 21st century, they used to perform them in outlying stages.

In the case of the merging rituals, the Bulgarian Community has been playing an active role in the organization of the different festivals and events. Deeply convinced of the importance of these rituals to empower the position of the community, the Bulgarian Associations have become active in the

organization and management of the different merging festivities. An example is the organization of the 2013 Carnival. As mentioned above, this festivity is arranged by the local authorities, offering a place for the participation of the migrant associations. In the last celebration, two different Bulgarian Associations, Stara Planina and Asociación Hispano-Búlgara de Ayuda al Inmigrante, organized the different activities along the weekend, playing the role of coordinators among the other migrant associations.

Their participation in the Carnival should be understood taking into account the cultural difference. As many of them told me during the festivities, Carnivals in Bulgaria are celebrated at a very different calendar time (they profess the Orthodox religion) and have a completely different meaning. While, in Valladolid, everyone is expected to be dressed up, in Bulgaria, it is only expected from some selected people from rural areas where masquerades are celebrated (SCHARLANOVA 2010). However, this difference in the comprehension of the festivity did not avoid the active participation of the Bulgarian Association in the Carnival of the town. Not only did they coordinate this event last year, but, after the celebration of this event, they also made several different proposals to the authorities to arrange some changes in the different events. As a result of these proposals, which turned into an effusive discussion at the local authorities' office, in 2014, the opening march was held

in a different place. Therefore, their participation in the rituals of the town gives them the possibility to take part in the city making by transforming such rituals.

The implication of the Bulgarian community in the city making through the management of the Cultural Heritage does not end with the Bulgarian and Merging Rituals. Last year, during my fieldwork, they usually claimed some specific place to show the Bulgarian Culture also within the Local Rituals. As some of the Bulgarians explained me, they had realized they were performing their rituals and culture exhibitions “only in some secondary festivities”. They wanted to perform them also during the main local rituals and festivities. As mentioned above, their participation in the local rituals is expected at an individual level. Now it is clear that they are also claiming for a collective participation. They have made some concrete proposals, such as the inclusion of Bulgarian folkdance groups in the traditional folkdance exhibition held during the main Festivities of the Virgin of St. Lorenz, or the presence of some relevant singer and music player from Bulgaria on the main stage in the Main Square. “We want to show to the local people that we also have good music players, singers... Local people don’t know a lot about Bulgarian culture, and it will be a good opportunity to solve this problem”. Even if, so far, they have not succeeded in this claim, they never hesitate to ask for new places of participation within the local community.

Modern towns are social complexes composed of different cultural groups which interact with each other developing the city as a whole. The many different migrant groups take part in the making of the city through the participation in the city life. This starts a process of redefinition of the different urban places, where the place surpasses the physical dimension, gaining new meanings for the community. Those meanings emerge from the social interaction of the different social actors. The management of the Cultural Heritage can be a successful way to participate in the process of the emergence of the new meanings of the urban space; it becomes a useful way to participate in the city making process. As shown by the field cases, it is important not only for the local population, but also for the migrants settled in a town. Hence Cultural Heritage plays an important role in the modern urban scenery.

Concluding remarks

This paper has explained the importance of the management of the Cultural Heritage as a remarkable way to participate in society for a migrant community. The performance of some rituals can be understood within the process of empowerment of a migrant community in the city life. This way, they cooperate in the process of city making.

Cultural Heritage, both Material and Intangible, is closely related to the notion of community. It has some meanings linked to the community which

preserves and manages it. These meanings are not a definitive stage, but a process of negotiation in which the community shapes its identity through the Cultural Heritage and models its Cultural Heritage according to its identity. Hence, the management of the Cultural Heritage is an important process underlying the making and preservation of a group. Regarding the Intangible Heritage, ritual and its performance lay the ground for the group making process. When considering a modern society, composed of several different groups of people, these rituals become especially interesting. Sometimes they involve different groups, sometimes they are related only to one of the groups settled in the town, but they are always linked to the construction of the group.

Since the rituals and festivities are important to the social scenery, the participation in them becomes a remarkable way of integration. In some cases, the participation in some festivities is expected in the way of associations. Those associations act as collective social actors. Their participation in the different rituals allows them to start a process of empowerment of the group. In this case, belonging to such associations gives to the subject the opportunity to reach a better place in the social arena. In this sense, it is possible to speak about a successful integration of the different associations. However, this integration happens together with a kind of segregation. The empowerment of such collective social actors also implies the reinforcement of boundaries. This reinforcement stresses the cultural difference and allows the emergence of

segregation. Integration and segregation should be meant as two linked components of a dialectical process in the making of the social life. The management of the Cultural Heritage and, specifically, the performance of the ritual, become crucial in such a dialectical process.

The performance of the ritual also transforms the urban space, which takes a symbolic meaning. The management of the Cultural Heritage contributes to the emergence of new meanings for some concrete places of the urban stage. Centre and periphery are not definitive defined places, but they are also involved in the continual transformation of the city. The different collective social actors can change the meaning of the different places through their participation in the performance and definition of the ritual. In this sense, the management of the Cultural Heritage can be understood as a way to participate in the redefinition process of the town. The performance of the ritual appears as a way to take part in the process of the city making.

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