

# LOCAL CULTURE AS A RESOURCE IN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTHWEST-FINLAND ARCHIPELAGO

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## ABSTRACT

In cultural and regional politics in the European Union, and in practice for instance in the Southwest-Finland Archipelago, local culture and cultural heritage are considered resources. Global boundlessness, heterogeneity and change are basic qualities of culture. However, in regional development, culture is seen and used as a number of different local cultures with their own essential cultural heritage.

The culture of local everyday life is opposite to, and in tension with, the construct of cultures used in regional development. Accordingly, culture should primarily be safeguarded as a heterogenic, dynamic and interactive process of everyday life. This process is the most important resource of local culture. In addition, culture should be safeguarded as value-based cultural constructions, such as brands or common identities of certain cultures, with for instance cultural heritage as a part of it. In the latter case, a common, transparent definition of these brands, identities and cultural heritages with their different values, is needed.

**KEYWORDS:** cultural sustainability • regional development • Southwest-Finland Archipelago • everyday culture • production of cultural heritage

## HOW CULTURE FUNCTIONS AS A RESOURCE?

In this article I analyse local cultural identities in everyday life, and cultural elements used as brands or identities in local development work in the Southwest-Finland Archipelago. Local cultural elements and identities can be seen as resources in many ways. The role of current everyday life in its various forms is, however, often quite invisible in this context. In accordance with this, the research question in this article is: what is the relationship between the spheres of cultural identities, firstly in everyday life and secondly in local development?

The aim of using culture as a resource is to develop local economic activities and wellbeing in a sustainable way. The Brundtland Commission (the World Commission on Environment and Development) launched the concept of sustainable development in 1987 (*Our Common Future* 1987). At that time this consisted of ecological, economic and social dimensions. In addition to these, the needs and status of cultural sustainability have been elevated. In this context, in recent years cultural sustainability has been discussed more and more as a concept both in academic spheres and in local development (Birkeland, Soini 2009).

UNESCO and the Council of Europe have played an important role in providing a forum for the development of different concepts and activities aimed at establishing cultural sustainability. The emphasis has changed during the past decades. Important steps in this change have been the conventions for safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage (UNESCO 1972; 2003), partly before the work of the Brundtland Commission, and such publications as *Our Creative Diversity* (UNESCO 1998) and *In From the Margins* (Euroopan neuvosto 1998), published in different European languages. Intangible, changing and individual elements of culture have been brought more and more to the fore in these discussions. In local development it seems extremely difficult to achieve a situation wherein both the changing and varying everyday culture and constructions of cultural heritages when seen as resources are regarded as equal. Accordingly, my second question in this article is: what should be sustained in the local culture for safeguarding and use as a resource in local development?

#### THE SOUTHWEST-FINLAND ARCHIPELAGO TODAY

Southwest Finland has a large and idyllic archipelago covering 10,000 km<sup>2</sup> of water and including over 22,000 islands. It includes, on the one hand, large and fertile islands in the inner archipelago, suitable for farming. Yet on the other hand 75 per cent of the islands, mainly situated in the outer archipelago, have less than one hectare of surface area, and many are barren (Granö et al. 1999: 33, 38). The area is divided into 9 municipalities.<sup>1</sup> Some of these municipalities are partly on the mainland, so that only some of the population are islanders. The population of the islands is in all ca. 17,000 (*Suomen tilastollinen vuosikirja* 2005: 92–94; Sisäasiainministeriö 2007: 56–57). The majority of people living in two of these municipalities have Swedish as their mother tongue, thus the relation between Finnish and Swedish in this area is the opposite of that of Finland as a whole, wherein the proportion of the Swedish speaking population is 5.5 per cent (*Suomen tilastollinen vuosikirja* 2005: 92–94).

The living conditions in the Southwest-Finland Archipelago changed during the course of the modernisation process. Former sources of livelihood, mainly agriculture, fishing and rural shipping, are no longer as profitable for the inhabitants. There is some industry in the area, partly rooted in the 17th century. Nevertheless, primary livelihoods maintained their relatively strong position even during industrialised era. In the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century fishing was extremely profitable. The situation changed, however, after Finland became independent in 1917 and lost its position in the Russian internal market. The number of people dependent on fishing and agriculture for their livelihood has fallen considerably. The most extensive branch of industry is currently the service sector, while tourism is considered promising (Lukala 1986: 228–32; Andersson 1997: 26–28; 1998). During the 20th century the population fell steadily, especially in the outer Archipelago where fishing had had a relatively strong position. Nevertheless, since the 1970s, the size of the population has remained quite stable (Vainio 1981: 33; Bergbom, Bergbom 2005: 57–61). Although living conditions have been changing rapidly, many old cultural traits are still practised in some form. In all, both earlier industrialisation and the globalisation of our own time have brought about significant structural and cultural changes in the Archipelago area. Thus, there is a need for local development in the area.

The core of global transition in our time is considered to be cultural change. Firstly, the essential point is transition from the intentional uniformity of the industrial age to the creative individuality and cultural heterogeneity of the current time and in the future. This is not only visible in everyday life, but also in other changes, such as in the economic and administrative activities and structures. Secondly, an essential element in the global transition is dematerialisation of the economy and society. Increasingly, part of production and consumption will become intangible items, and the material part of the value of products will decrease proportionally. This will increase the value of symbols in culture. Thirdly, cultural change consists of networks that connect local and global elements to each other and thus, to more and more multidimensional and dynamic social structures. The new era has often been mentioned as a network society according to Manuel Castells (Castells 1996; 1998: 336–360; Wilenius 2004: 22–29; see also Florida 2004: 1–17, 267–269).

The particular local characteristics and the importance of tourism, which is related to this, in the Archipelago is expected to grow in the wake of globalisation on both a national and international level. Valuable exotic symbols of the past are to be found in the Archipelago region, and it is hoped that these will be 'productised', for example, in the global competition of the travel market. In the deeds and memories of the people living in the Archipelago, and to some extent in their means of living, despite the multicultural radical changes, an age-old primary form of livelihood, the seafaring activities practised in the area and the customs related to these continue to be preserved through many features.

The European Union also encourages citizens to exploit the special features of local culture in regional development in order to achieve further prosperity, vitality and economic gain, and this also applies to this region now in the throws of change (Shore 2000: 42–54). Finnish local development work integrated into the European Union empowers more than ever those organisations concerned with local development in their area. At the same time according to EU principles these organisations and the areas they represent become subjected to mutual competition during the search for special features in the area and when significant economic support is being offered. In this whole process the originality of culture becomes a tool for fostering development and competition (Hautamäki 1999: 26–27; *Alueiden kehittämissä* 2002).

In local development work all those regions defined organisationally thus develop and exploit, for instance, the special features of the region, its culture and cultural traditions. Each area strives to be unique and create an authentic identity or brand, based on its own culture. These should then further materialise into products and services.

The regional council, municipalities, sub-regions and different organisations connected to the European Union<sup>2</sup> aim to improve economic and living conditions in the Southwest-Finland Archipelago. The working areas of these organisations partly overlap, and they are changing, for instance through the merging of different municipalities. In these circumstances, all of these organised areas are now, amongst other things, geared to make use of their regional distinctiveness and cultural heritage in their work in order to improve the economic and living conditions in their own areas. Every area needs to be culturally special, and different from its neighbours particularly. Every

area should formulate an authentic local identity, which should also be materialised as products and services. In this process they engage in reciprocal competition for the same resources: new inhabitants, new enterprises in tourism for instance, customers for enterprises, and economic support for local development from national sources and the European Union. In the European Union, cultural policy is always connected to regional policy.

From the point of view of research it is essential to view local development work itself as part of culture. Local culture is not only a tool to be exploited in regional development or a target for it. Local culture consists of activities, meanings and the material surroundings of local people as an entirety, including local development activities and the outcomes of this. In this way it is possible to analyse the relationship between the spheres of local everyday culture and local development work, power as a part of culture, and the cultural meaning process in general.

### WHAT IS CULTURE?

If regional development is to be analysed as a part of culture, it is crucial to define the concept of culture. In early anthropological and ethnological research, culture is mostly seen as a collective, static and homogeneous entity with clear borders around a certain area or group of people. In spite of recent discussions about cultural change, variation and the difficulties of drawing clear cultural boundaries as well as of the alternative view of culture as ambiguous in a post-modern way, culture is still quite often seen as a static and homogeneous entity with defined borders. This is the case for instance in the different activities of regional development. (See e.g. Goody 1994; Keesing 1994; Vayda 1994; Moore, Sanders 2006.)

According to recent ethnological and anthropological research, culture is at the same time both an individual and collective dynamic process containing both creativity and continuity as its qualities. Hence, cultural activities as well as different tangible and intangible phenomena are seen as constantly changing and varying elements in the interaction process of culture. Likewise, the thoughts about unique cultures, with their own essence, are parts of these dynamic cultural processes. (See e.g. Goody 1994; Keesing 1994; Vayda 1994; Anttonen 1999: 196–260, 380–451; Moore, Sanders 2006.)

In addition, in my view boundlessness heterogeneity and change are inevitable basic qualities of culture. Culture, therefore, is in this sense primarily one global, dynamic process, in my definition a process of semiosis.<sup>3</sup> It consists of both the material and non-material elements of culture. They inevitably change and vary in semiosis synchronically and diachronically. However, culture is, in the process of semiosis, also in some ways constant, habits are a part of culture and culture also has a tendency towards stability and continuity. Culture is connected to the future, the present and the past. People are continuously searching for different cultural forms and structures in both local and global interaction between different individuals, and between individuals and their environments, including social environments with different organisations. Then again, culture contains both changing and resisting elements and powers, with slower or faster change always in motion in all of its parts. Further, it always contains elements with both local and global cultural traits. (See also e.g. Gerholm, Gerholm 1989; Hannerz 1992.)

One's own physical and conceptual surroundings form the basis of one's own part of global culture. Every human being is in interaction with his/her own surroundings and with other human beings in the semiosis. Every human being develops a relatively solid knowledge of the qualities of her/his surroundings during his/her life. When a group of human beings is a part of relatively constant, to them familiar, physical and ideal surroundings, relatively separated units of cultural phenomena are possible. It is then possible that in the basically boundless, heterogeneous and global culture, relatively homogenous and separate units will arise. However, it is not possible to draw clear boundaries for these separate cultures, it is not possible in place, time nor in social structure. And it is not possible to found real homogenous cultural units. People can also belong at the same time to several such cultural homogeneous clusters. They can associate with these or estrange themselves from them. In this way the crowd of people that belong to these clusters is also in continuous motion. The common denominators in the homogeneous clusters can be place, organisation, the internet and other media, ethnicity, nationality, an ideology or, for example, some interest shared in common (see Croucher 2004: 185–196).

In this connection it is, firstly, important to search definitions of culture without *a priori* ideas about certain cultures. Secondly, the important models for analysis in cultural research are those which help in recognising homogenising, essentialising and static phenomena in the basically global, dynamic and boundless cultural process (see Keesing 1994: 309–310). The research material of ethnology and anthropology consists of features that help us understand those mechanisms that tend to create the boundaries, homogeneity and stability of culture. In this respect the different institutions related to economic and ideological powers are the central objects for study in cultural research in general. In the context of local development work, the subject of this paper, it is relevant to take different organisations, such as the European Union, UNESCO, and the various organisations concerned with local development and the administration of cultural heritage, to become part of the local and 'glocal' culture analysed in ethnological research.

#### LOCAL CULTURE AS A TOOL FOR DEVELOPMENT

In the following I compare local economic development with the promotion of the welfare of different ethnic groups using the model that the Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth has developed for analysing ethnicity and ethnopolitics. Barth divides activities and phenomena in ethnic processes into three levels. The micro level consists of the unorganised everyday life of all people. According to Barth, on the micro level people formulate their own local identities and culture, their relationship to their own surroundings, its people and its nature – or their ethnicity – in a constant interaction with other people. This happens through their own contacts both in their local neighbourhood and in international networks, for example, through trade, the media and the internet, or other contacts. In addition, tourism and cultural heritage are parts of everyday life on the micro level. On that level, then, culture accords with a newer definition of culture as a process of interaction between different individuals and individuals and their environments. Culture, images of cultures, and belonging to some area or a group

of people – cultural identity – are not piles of fixed collective features, but rather, processes that are in a constant state of change in the cultural interaction process. Homogeneous cultural entities with clear borders do not exist on the micro level (Barth 1994: 183–184; see also Hannerz 1992).

Local and regional organisations function on the middle level. They are, for instance, those organisations in regional development or related to tourism or cultural heritage, or again universities in their role as a developer in different aspects of regional affairs. In society, these organisations have the right to use power and define different cultural meanings, and perhaps also to define the rights and duties of citizens, depending on the type of organisation. According to Barth, the intention of these organisations is to create a feeling of community and to motivate people to strive towards some goal – be it ethnic or economic. In terms of the development of regional economic welfare, the intention is to create unique slogans, brands and tangible products from local culture on the one hand, and to strengthen cultural identity in the search for cooperation and enterprise, on the other (Barth 1994: 183–184). Tangible and intangible cultural heritage are important tools in this work. People working in different organisations on the middle level need to create homogeneous and stable images of certain regional, local and group based cultures for their tools. A dynamic and heterogeneous definition of culture as a process is not easily suited to such a tool. Consequently, in the activities on the middle level culture is usually seen according to the older definition of culture as the essential, homogeneous and stable cultural whole of an area or a group of people.

On the micro-level the basic element of culture is an interactive cultural process. Different cultural tangible and intangible elements always change and vary in this process. Because of that, these elements are not constant. Instead the process itself is a constant and essential element of culture on both the local and global level. In the interaction between individuals on the micro-level and different organisations on the middle level, the symbols and stories concerning cultures from different areas and groups of people emerge. They create images of homogeneous and stable cultures with clear boundaries. All individual human beings create their own relationship with these symbols and stories, and they are not necessarily bound by the cultures described through them (*ibid.*).

In activities on the middle level, for its part, culture is usually presented as relatively constant cultural products or images. People working on the middle level and using cultural heritage as a tool in their activities do not usually pay main attention to the promotion of the cultural process with its changing elements. Therefore, the micro and middle levels are opposites by their very nature. However, they cannot be mechanically separated and they have an impact on each other. Defined in too narrow and inflexible a way on the middle level, culture and identity as cultural heritage becomes able to cause tensions or conflicts with the dynamic complexity of everyday life. It is important to notice, that these tensions are not dependent of the origin of those people working in these areas. Rather, the determining factor is the nature of the activities of these people. In different organisations on the middle level both those native to the region and others do their work in same situation and under the same conditions. Consequently, the definition of a local or regional culture is based on the nature of the tasks of those engaged in work in different regional organisations (*ibid.*).

On the middle level it is impossible to act without integration on the macro level, as well. On the macro level the actors are national and international organisations, and they create a framework for local activities through legislation, administration, and the

financing of various activities (ibid.). In the contexts of regional development and cultural heritage these are for instance the European Union, UNESCO, and the national organisations concerned with regional development and cultural heritage, such as ministries and national museums. They take care of, among other things, the production of cultural heritage and provide the guidelines for regional development work. Also on this level, as on the middle level, culture is usually viewed from the perspective of the older definition of culture as consisting of essential, homogeneous and stable cultural wholes.

All things considered, according to Barth's model in different tasks on the middle and macro levels people form and use homogenising and essentialising cultural structures for use in regional development or in the tourist industry, for example. One concrete example of this is tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The activities of organisations and administration, functioning on these levels, are by their basic cultural nature – as more or less static structures – in opposition to a dynamic everyday life, in other words, in opposition to a dynamic, individual based and global process of culture with its diffuse local and global parts.

It is not possible to mechanically divide culture into different, separate levels. In reality they are intertwined. Even one and the same person can function on all three levels in his or her different roles and tasks in culture and society. All these three levels are parts of the cultural entirety and interact in the local and global context. Accordingly, both the process of interaction between individuals and individuals and organised cultural constructions are in interaction in the global cultural process.

#### IMPORTANT ELEMENTS IN THE EVERYDAY LIFE OF THE ARCHIPELAGO<sup>4</sup>

There are several different ways in which, firstly the archipelago and its borders, and secondly the experience of one's own archipelago area, take shape in the habitual everyday life of the Southwest-Finland Archipelago. Even in the broadest sense the archipelago<sup>5</sup> does not include any large islands situated close to the mainland. In all, the archipelago can be defined as a continuum, which in its largest sense covers almost all of the islands in the surrounding sea. The strictest definition would be that the archipelago only includes those islands that can be reached in one's own boat or perhaps by ferry, but not by bridge. It is also necessary for people to live there throughout the year, people with their familiar roots in the archipelago. They should also be able to survive in the demanding environment of the archipelago. All told, according to these criteria the outer archipelago is for some people symbolically a more proper archipelago than the inner archipelago. At the same time the archipelago in its largest sense is a proper archipelago for others. Inside the continuum there are several smaller archipelagos. Even one and the same person can define them in varying ways in different situations. Ideas about the archipelago concept continuously change, and especially a new bridge or ferry connections can cause reappraisals of definitions even concerning what the very nature of a proper symbolic archipelago is.

Generally, the definition of one's own archipelago has already been outlined with its familiar areas related to everyday activities, thoroughfares and waterways, while still other areas may remain unfamiliar. Unfamiliar areas could also consist of archipelago districts wherein one's own mother tongue was not used as the majority language. In

cases such as these one's own area was not defined in terms of conscious symbols, rather as familiar, habitual activities. As with the outer archipelago the language boundary was also mentioned as a symbolic border. In this case it was a border around one's own archipelago area or inside of it. In the latter case one's own archipelago was bilingual and the language border was one of its characteristics.

In the everyday culture of the archipelago, nature is the element that ties people most strongly to their own archipelago area. All of my informants in the Archipelago area consider nature and environment as important matters in their relationship with their home area, but their descriptions of them vary from individual to individual. What is essential can be the familiar view from the kitchen window. It can also be one's habit to use one's own navigable passages, if these are part of daily life. Not everyone living in the archipelago has their own boat. The experience of one's own landscape can have a concrete form as an enjoyment of the continuously changing sea and nature – whether this is seen from the kitchen window or from a fishing boat in the early hours of the morning, as the following quotation from one of my interviews shows.

I: The sea air in particular is to me something about which I cannot imagine anything greater, when spring and the breaking up of the ice comes and... You see, when you get up with the sun and then go to your perch-pike nets, and the birds are singing and it is quite calm and you can be alone and in peace and... That is what is most essential of all. Of course, sometimes the weather is bad, there are winds and everything, but... I don't know, I suppose people who are not interested in fishing... they would never do it, the weather is so bad sometimes, there is weak ice and storms and everything. But, you see, you can actually do it, when you have an interest in doing it. But you must have this interest. I was a very small girl the first time, I went as a four- or five-year-old, so. (TYKL/SPA/435)<sup>6</sup>

Many of my informants felt they are at one with nature and capable of surviving even in a harsh environment. One example of this is the ability to cross over the ice-covered sea in winter. It sometimes happens that someone falls through the ice, and is often also able to get up out again. Such events are a symbolic reminder of the skills needed in the archipelago areas, where for instance communication is often more dependent on the capricious state of nature than on the mainland. These skills are part of the archipelago identity of the informant with whom I had the following discussion.

KS: Aha, so this is a part of insular life?

[...]

I: Yes, it is, this was one experience. First time I fell through the ice with a sledge was in my secondary school days, one Wednesday afternoon, when we went home, we always went home on Wednesdays in wintertime, and it so happened that we fell, sledges, the neighbour's girl and I. And it was my first time then. (TYKL/SPA/403)<sup>7</sup>

For many people living in the archipelago important cultural features also include familiar neighbours and regular contacts with them. People always meet others when they are going about their daily affairs in the village and they usually exchange some words with them. This is a very simple but very important part of their life. The community supports people when they belong to it. One concrete expression of this is the

mutual help given in the neighbourhood, according to need. The next quotation is from an interview and relates to this.

I: [Y]ou can always get help. I don't have any problems if my car suddenly stops, then I make a phone call and say, oh [...], can you drive me, I should go to the bank, or whatever, so there, it is always near, and you can get everything done well, no problems, it is of course possible that you will be asked, but I think that basically the positive side of a small community is that, if you want, if you trust what you do, like you do in a small community, so you feel chuffed, but I must admit that in a small community it is also so that they don't tolerate very much, it's sad, but they really don't. (TYKL/SPA/427)<sup>8</sup>

However, as the same quotation shows, small communities also have negative sides. Intolerance towards new settlers and new ideas are among these. Many of my informants also told me about never-ending quarrels in some Archipelago villages or on some islands. Nevertheless, communities are elementary and important parts of the living environment for many inhabitants of the archipelago. They have a feeling of belonging despite the positive and negative circumstances. The following quotation from an interview talks about this.

I: [Y]ou just belong together, it is really important, you belong together, you belong to the past and to the people here, in both a positive and negative way, but it is natural, it is obvious, it is a connection, I suppose that this is the most important thing, the connection, there is a strong, and important connection with regard to actions, I think at least, that this is of the essence. (TYKL/SPA/441)<sup>9</sup>

All in all, identification with the archipelago consists of participating in practices related to nature and the community. These operate partly as tacit knowledge, which is sometimes difficult to grasp and describe in words. In some contexts identification consists of conscious symbols. Symbols of this kind are at the same time the beautiful and violent nature of the archipelago, the shores of the islands which form the boundaries, the freedom to work and define one's own way of life inside these limits, and the skills and knowledge learned on the islands, which take priority over the administrative and literal knowledge defined outside of them. The borders of the islands are accentuated by, firstly, difficult transportation, that is ferries or the absence of them. Secondly, they are accentuated by the freedom and arduous work in their own archipelago area and the control over land and natural products. And, thirdly, they are accentuated by, on the one hand, unaesthetics and on the other by aesthetics and hospitality with gardens and delicacies to take care of guests, who are not seen to be able to survive in the harsh conditions of the islands. Nowadays, these elements of identities are connected with modern livelihoods and the modern way of life with its various commodities.

Therefore, the core element in archipelago identities is living on one's own island in a sensitive balance with the other people living there, assisted by one's own skills and knowledge and dependent on the conditions of nature. These traits are stronger in the outer archipelago, but it is possible to find them in some form in the inner archipelago.

Culture and identities are in constant motion generally, and also in the archipelago. Moreover, a very prevalent element in these identities is the will of the residents of the

archipelago to define changes themselves within the shores of the islands. Nature is an acceptable and strong definer of actions and identities unlike the administrative and literal knowledge defined outside of the islands. However, impacts are given and received in many ways both through local and global interaction networks.

#### THE ARCHIPELAGO IN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Organisations in local development work produce their own images of archipelago<sup>10</sup> culture. I present two different examples here, the nostalgic archipelago and the archipelago as a modern high quality product. The nostalgic example is a project called TuMa. This name comes from the words *Turism – Matkailu*, that is, tourism in both Swedish and Finnish. TuMa project was led by the development centre of the Åboland sub-region (Skärgårdshavets utvecklingscentral – Saaristomerens kehittämiskeskus). The Åboland sub-region is one part of the Southwest-Finland Archipelago. Nevertheless, this development centre had as its task the development of the whole Archipelago area in Southwest Finland as far as special questions related to the Archipelago are concerned. One of those questions was about Archipelago tourism. Therefore, within the TuMa project the development centre of the Åboland sub-region worked on behalf of the tourist industry in the whole Archipelago region in Southwest Finland (TYKL/SPA/442).

This project published a strategy for Archipelago tourism. In this, culture is seen as cultural landscape and as customs, habits and livelihoods which are vanishing in the modernisation process and which one should now take care of for the purposes of tourism. This strategy reveals the impoverishment of this culture as a weakness in the area and states that “the Archipelago should be inhabited, and the residents should preferably engage in fishing and animal husbandry”<sup>11</sup> (Saaristomerens kehittämiskeskus 1998: 10–11). There the aim seems to be to freeze the island culture into an old-time idyll suited to tourists (see e.g. Baudrillard 1983: 15; Ritzer, Liska 1997: 108). Notwithstanding, in the published strategy made by the TuMa project there is also an awareness of the continuous cultural changes that have always been underway on the one hand, and on the other, an awareness of the real and radical decline in fishing and agriculture that used to be distinctive of the Archipelago (Saaristomerens kehittämiskeskus 1998: 10–11).

Despite the awareness of cultural change, the above-mentioned Archipelago cultural heritage is still seen in the area as functioning as a tool for increasing vitality, luring new inhabitants, strengthening economic activity, and obtaining resources for local development. It is used by local organisations, which, as mentioned, often formulate images of an idyllic local culture as crystallised and by its very nature homogeneous and static. These images should also, according to the ideas of development workers, be materialised as unique sites, products and services (see also Bendix 2000; Klein 2000; Jöhler 2002). Contemporary everyday life with all of its modern and contradictory elements is not easily seen as a part of local culture in this context.

The TuMa project strategy for archipelago tourism strives to keep the former idealised insular lifestyle alive in the whole Archipelago area with fishing and agriculture as livelihoods. This is contradictory to the current industrial structure of the Southwest-Finland Archipelago; even though local people would also be pleased to see fishing and

agriculture – with modern techniques used in production – as more profitable livelihoods than they in fact are. In the Archipelago region there are more and more people who make a living from other means. Tourism is one of those. Former means of livelihood in pre-modern form, connected with the sea and the islands, are important for tourism in order to project the originality of the archipelago. In this context, for the needs of tourism, local people are expected to represent an idealised and frozen image of the Archipelago linked to the past, which does not allow them to live their own modern life and culture in their own home islands as they would wish.

Another example is a project called Skärgårdssmak designed to develop the restaurant business in the islands. This was led by the Interreg organisation which operates in the whole Archipelago region from Sweden’s Stockholm waterfront as far as Turku in Finland. My material concerns the operation of this project in the Southwest-Finland Archipelago area.

The Skärgårdssmak project was aimed at creating a new high quality brand for the archipelago, rather like the concept of the Alpine area. In practice the target was to establish a chain of restaurants of international standard which would deserve a special Skärgårdssmak sign. These restaurants would use local raw materials, whereupon the success of the restaurants should benefit agriculture and fishing in the area. Furthermore, local high quality handicraft products made of local raw materials were linked to

*Es wundert es niemanden, daß die Elbe "Frischer Koch des Jahres 1997" neben von einem ausserordentlichen Schärenkoch ernannt wurde, denn von 21-jährigen Michael Björklund, der sich von ebenfalls auch bei "Skärgårdssmak" engagiert, um seine Kunst an andere weiterzugeben.*





*Achten Sie auf dieses Zeichen: Es garantiert die weitestgehende Verwendung genuiner Rohstoffe aus der Schärenregion, die Anwendung traditioneller Rezepte und eine qualitativ hohe Kochkunst, die sich dem Streben nach ständiger Verbesserung verpflichtet hat.*



## *Projekt Schären delikatessen*

Illustration 1. Page from the German version of Skärgårdssmak brochure Die Schären from 1997. TYKL/SPA/462.

the project. The restaurant brand is neither based on the traditional life of the area, nor on current everyday life experienced in the area. It presents an image of a tourist destination for global tourism markets, with suitable delicacies in such a milieu. The food on the plates (see Illustration 1) is not the food local people are used to eating, nor have been used to eating in the past. It says nothing about Archipelago culture.

The restaurateurs were selected to the project and trained in it, so that they would be able to complete at an international level and thus gain the coveted Skärgårdssmak sign. The teachers were chefs from outside of the Archipelago. The principle means of livelihood in the archipelago were mentioned in the project material by means of an aesthetic cultural landscape, however the project had no conscious target of providing any description of Archipelago culture (see also Heldt Cassel 2003). For its part, the Skärgårdssmak project did receive quite a lot of thanks in the Archipelago region and its merits were praised. At the same time it was criticised somewhat more than other projects, although the criticism did not always have a clear target.

#### INTERACTION BETWEEN EVERYDAY LIFE AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT WORK

Many of those who are engaged in the local development of the Archipelago also live in the area. Thus, in their everyday life they think, perceive and act as a part of its basic interactive cultural process at the micro-level. However, in their activities they also realise the different goals of organisations on the middle level. To some extent the actions of organisations were expressed clearly. These positioned themselves often consciously in opposition to everyday life in the Archipelago with the goal of bringing some changes to it. In these activities, tensions easily arose between the everyday life in the Archipelago and the constructions of the Archipelago used in regional development.

To a degree, actions in local development work emphasised essential traits taken from everyday identities in the Archipelago. These were, for instance, the value of the former way of life and the archipelago skills and knowledge that were part of it. They had deep meaning for local people, although these local people did not wish to limit the development of the Archipelago only to the protection and preservation of a past way of life. People in Archipelago do not wish to spend their lives in a museum.

In some respects, the aims of the development projects were consciously opposed to the local archipelago identities. This was the case, for instance, in projects in which the goal was to further develop education in the Archipelago or to create new forms of cooperation in the area. Then, for many people, these activities began to overstep important island boundaries where a will existed to define life forms inside of these boundaries without the impact of the outside authorities. These began also to violate the area in which a difficult social balance of Archipelago communities was being maintained. However, novel practices and relations in cooperation were established, if these activities could be successfully combined with the central traits of the archipelago identities.

To some degree, the symbols that picture the Archipelago and that were produced by the projects unconsciously collided with some of the essential traits of the archipelago identities. When this took place, these projects generated Archipelago images by using somewhat unfamiliar elements of local identities. This was also performed

with the help of outside authorities, which in itself conflicts with many archipelago identities. This was the case with the Skärgårdssmak project. People did not feel that the high quality brand of the project was in harmony with their own local identities. This is important, because everyday culture is, on the one hand, very intimate and private, and on the other, highly collective and public. Because of the restaurants in the vicinity, the marketing of the home area as a tourist attraction and the expectations of tourists visiting the area, the collective local brands become part of the everyday lives of everybody living in these localities. In the case of Skärgårdssmak, the disharmony between the Archipelago project brand and many of the local identities produced a non-verbal experience: the project was selling off the Archipelago in a non-material form.

#### SAFEGUARDING INTERACTION, CHANGES AND HETEROGENEITY

As a whole, it is the goal of the culture and regional policy of the European Union to produce new local identities for supporting local development and for creating new economic possibilities in the European regions. This policy encourages the activities of using cultural heritage in producing local brands and homogeneous local identities, without mentioning as a target the creation of interaction with different local identities on the micro level of local and glocal everyday practices. This policy does not, however, reject outright activities of this kind, if developers take them into consideration and adopt European regional and cultural policy in other respects.

Cultural symbols as elements of brands and identities are relevant for people, both in everyday life and in regional development. Cultural tensions between these symbols in their different contexts can affect all: creativity and conflicts, wellbeing and marginalisation. Culturally sustainable development takes this into consideration. Developers need cultural understanding to be able to avoid the negative effects of tensions. This understanding consists, firstly, of how culture functions as a whole on the micro, middle and macro levels. Secondly, it consists of understanding which cultural elements, symbols and values exist at different times, in different regions, contexts, and on different analytical levels of culture. It is important to ensure that questions concerning cultural sustainability and the everyday life of people in general are evaluated even in those development projects which do not operate on the basis of cultural questions as being primary activities.

To be able to analyse this whole, it is essential to look at local development work, with its projects and organisations, as a part of culture, not only as actors who use and develop culture. Identities and processes of identification have value both for individual human beings living their everyday lives at the micro level and for organisations functioning on the middle level. They are in inevitable interaction with each other.

Culturally sustainable development takes into consideration, firstly, all cultural processes functioning on the micro, middle, and macro levels. This must be done both in those cultural forms that function as non-verbal habits, and those cultural forms that are clearly expressed as symbols. My statement is that primarily culture should be sustained as a heterogenic, dynamic and interactive process on the micro level. This process is the most important resource of local culture, and should be supported in regional and cultural policy. Secondly, culture should be sustained as value-based

cultural constructions, such as brands, common identities or images of certain cultures, with for instance cultural heritage as a part of it. In the latter case, a common, transparent definition of these brands, identities and cultural heritage with different values in relation to these, is needed.

In the definition of one's own culture as different cultural constructions, culturally sustainable development has as one principle the notion that it is necessary to take into consideration other areas or groups of people. None of these groups have the right to declare that some cultural traits belong only to them, if other groups display similar traits in their everyday lives. Neither has any actor in local development the sole right to define the culture of its target region. Culture everywhere is based upon creative cultural interaction in local, national and global networks with heterogeneous and dynamic cultural traits.

## NOTES

1 These are Kaarina, Kemiönsaari, Kustavi, Länsi-Turunmaa, Masku, Naantali, Salo, Taivassalo and Uusikaupunki. At the beginning of 2009 the number of municipalities decreased from 18 to 9, because many of them merged to form larger units than before. The towns of Kaarina, Naantali and Turku have some islands in their territory which are not included in the Archipelago. In Finland, the Archipelago is governed by a separate law (*Laki saariston kehityksen edistämisestä* 1981/1993). According to a statute based on this law, certain islands belonging to Kaarina, Naantali and Turku do not belong to the Archipelago (*Valtioneuvoston asetus saaristokunnista* 2008). This article is based on my doctoral dissertation. In it, I used this definition of the Archipelago as a starting point. In my research, I interviewed people living in the Archipelago. According to my interviews, people living in the Archipelago also have their own definitions of the area. In many cases they are, however, in harmony with the definition of the Archipelago in this statute (Siivonen 2008: 219–223).

2 In my field research period, during the years 1997–2004, local development organisations connected to European Union were, in the Southwest-Finland Archipelago, the LEADER-association and the Interreg-organisation.

3 The semiotic definition of culture, based on the semiotics of Charles S. Peirce, I have presented earlier, in my dissertation (Siivonen 2008).

4 The analysis and examples in this section are based on my doctoral dissertation and the fieldwork material I collected for it (cf. Siivonen 2008).

5 Because here and in certain other cases, I do not necessarily refer to the administrative region of the Archipelago, I have decided to use the small case initial "a".

6 The same quotation in Finnish:

I: *Meri-ilmasto nimenomaan se on mul semmonen, et tota ei hianomppa ol, ko tule tämmöne kevääika ja ruppe jäät lähtemä. Sit nouse aamul aikasi ylös ja sää lähret kuhaverkoil, nii linnut laulaa ja o ihan tyoen ilma ja saa iha rauhas olla kato. Se on niin kun se aa ja oo siin asias. Tietysti siäl on kurjakin keli, et on tuulet ja kaikki, mut et. Mää tiärä, et varma semmoset kuka ei ol kiinostunu kalastuksesta, ei ikinä menis sitä tekemä, et kyl siäl niin pal kurja keli oälil on, et on heikot jäät ja on myrskyt ja kaike näköst. Se vaa jaksa, kato niin ko on kiinostunu siihe. Tai siin täyty olla niin ko kiinostust. Mää olen piänest tytöst lähtien sillon, ko mää ole joskus ollu tommone neljä viisvuotias, nii.*

7 The same quotation in Finnish:

KS: *Jaaha, niin tämä kuuluu tähän saaristolaisuuteen?*  
[...]

I: Joo, kyl se kuuluu, tää oli niin kun yks kokemus. Mää oon tota ensimmäisen kerran ollu kelkan kans jäissä yläasteaikan yks keskiviikkoiltapäivä, kun tultiin sitten kotiin, kun talviaikan keskiviikot käytiin, niin oli semmonen tilanne, että naapurin tytön kans mentiin kans jäihin kelkkojen kans tossa. Ja se oli ensimmäinen kerta ja.

8 The same quotation in Swedish:

I: [D]u har ju alltid hjälp, jag har ju inga problem om bilen plötsligt stannar så ringer jag och säger, oj [...], kör du mig, jag skulle till banken, eller vad som helst, så det finns, allting det nära, och man får allting välgjort, inga problem alltså, det kan ju hända att du blir uppställd, men jag tror att över huvudtaget alltså att ett litet samhälles plussida är det att, om du vill det själv, litar på vad du gör, så som man nu gör i ett litet samhälle, så mår man nog förbannat bra, men jag måste nog medge, att i ett litet samhälle det finns sådant också som, den tolererar nog inte allt för mycket, det är olyckligt, det gör den nog inte.

9 The same quotation in Swedish:

I: [M]an hör ju ihop, det är väldigt viktigt, man hör ihop, man är med den förflutna och med människorna här, så på gott och ont, men det är liksom naturligt, det är liksom självklart, det är ett sammanhang, det är väl det som är det allra viktigaste, sammanhanget, det finns ett starkt, och viktigt sammanhang att verka i, det tycker jag i alla fall, är väldigt väsentligt.

10 Archipelago means here the Southwest-Finland Archipelago in the TuMa project and a wider archipelago area in the other example, Skärgårdssmak project.

11 All translations by the author.

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TYKL – Archives of the School of Cultural Research, the Ethnology Archives, University of Turku.  
TYKL/SPA/395–468 – Katriina Siivonen's interviews and fieldwork material for her doctoral thesis.

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