

Switzerland and the UNESCO Conventions on Intangible Culture and Cultural Diversity

Abstract

In 2008, Switzerland ratified both the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression and the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. In a direct democracy these decisions closely involve multiple stakeholders. In this article, organizations and associations involved in the ratification process will be introduced and discussed against the background of the history of the intangible heritage convention. Next, I will address questions about particular understandings of culture and cultural concepts held by these different organizations, as well as the cultural and sociopolitical objectives or agendas they pursue through the implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The term *Volkskultur* plays a particularly important role in this context since it is often directly equated with intangible culture; thus, the article discusses the implications of this equation, including the cultural and political approaches that stem from it.

On March 20, 2008, the Swiss Parliament approved—by a wide majority—two international treaties: one, the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions; the other, the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The decision was subject to an optional referendum; that is, if 50,000 citizens had so requested, the ratification would have been submitted to the Swiss electorate for approval. However, since no political group adopted the referendum, the Swiss Federal Council deposited the ratification instruments at the headquarters of UNESCO in Paris after the July 10, 2008,

deadline for the referendum had passed. On October 16, 2008, Switzerland became a full-fledged State Party to the conventions.

In this article, I will discuss the treaty concerned with the protection of intangible culture (UNESCO 2003b), but without entirely ignoring connections between the two conventions.¹ The Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, whose basic text was written in 2003, aims at caring for living, traditional cultural heritage (that passed on from generation to generation), in part by raising awareness about its importance. Participating States Parties were called upon to create policy frameworks for promoting the practice and transmission of traditional expressive culture—music, theater, dance, craft, etc.—at the national level and within the framework of international cooperation. Official inventories of existing practices were envisioned as a way to create a foundation for State action and enable the protection and promotion of individual components of this heritage.

On the federal level preparations for the ratification were made by the Swiss UNESCO Commission² and the Federal Office of Culture.³ In the following sections I will outline how the previously unknown topic of intangible culture was introduced in Switzerland and how the attendant discussion is connected with the intentions of the Convention itself as well as with the perceptions of the cultural heritage that provide its basis.

History of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage

Since the end of World War II, UNESCO has supported efforts at safeguarding and protecting cultural as well as natural “treasures.” In the cultural domain, these had long been material objects of archeological, historical, or aesthetic importance. This approach resulted in a situation where objects placed under protection were primarily from the wealthy regions and states of the global North, which had access to centuries-old historic monuments, whereas the

South had substantially less evidence of its material cultural heritage. By contrast, intangible domains have long been excluded from preservation efforts in North and South, though attempts to place these under protection have been underway for decades. Merely conceptualizing intangible heritage remains highly controversial, as do more practical questions about how to safeguard cultural expressions such as storytelling and music, dance, and handicrafts. Science has long seen its main task as one of collecting and recording artifacts of culturally creative work, but such an objective does not actually protect the work, because it is in any event often no longer lived or practiced. Because associated knowledge and techniques are not integral to objects themselves, these elements of intangible culture were being lost.

In a first phase, UNESCO attempted to protect evidence of intangible culture by legal measures, such as copyright and patent protection. These efforts yielded no concrete results, since the cultural products in question often cannot be attributed to a single individual. In addition, creators are often unknown. Finally, when processes of acquisition and transmission happen anonymously, or in groups, many different variants are created.

The concept of intangible heritage emerged in the 1970s. The term itself was coined in 1982 at the UNESCO Mexico Conference (UNESCO 1982). A number of international agreements followed, such as the Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore (UNESCO 1989), the 1994 Living Human Treasures Programme, the 1997–98 Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity and, finally, the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO 2003b, hereafter “the Convention”).⁴ Article 2, paragraph 1 of the Convention defines “intangible cultural heritage” as the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith—that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible

cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.

Paragraph 2 of the same article specifies five types of intangible cultural heritage:

(a) oral traditions and expression, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; (b) performing arts; (c) social practices, rituals and festive events; (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; (e) traditional craftsmanship (UNESCO 2003b).

Further, the Convention calls upon States Parties—that is, those member states that had ratified it—to protect the intangible cultural heritage of their respective territories by identifying and inventorying the cultural goods in their territories that are worthy of protection, and by formulating and implementing a heritage policy. In employing the instrument of the list—by encouraging enumeration both on the national and international levels—UNESCO has resorted to the type of measure it had previously applied in other areas of its cultural policy.⁵

Thus, UNESCO has expanded the concept of heritage to include “living expressions and the traditions that countless groups and communities worldwide have inherited from their ancestors and transmitted to their descendants, in most cases orally” (UNESCO 2010). Over the years, discussions came to emphasize the role of culture producers, while increasingly minimizing the role of collectors and preservationists (researchers, archivists, curators, etc.). The

focus shifted from the product to the producer.

Reflected in the 2003 Convention is the fear that processes of globalization are leading to cultural homogenization and a reduction of cultural diversity, and, above all, pose a threat to the cultural practices of minorities. As UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura reminded the public in a statement marking the International Day of the World's Indigenous People, the Convention's preamble clearly suggests that "intangible cultural heritage is a mainspring of cultural diversity and a guarantee of sustainable development" (UNESCO Regional Office 2007). The prospect of preserving intangible culture is thus also tied to the maintenance of a cultural identity and the question of sustainable development.

Science and the Concept of Intangible Culture

The paradigm of intangible cultural heritage is not the result of scientific research and debate; rather, it emerges from a complex process of political negotiations in which issues of development and globalization play out against normative and often contradictory notions of culture, diversity, human rights, and equality of nations. It is thus hardly surprising that the concept of intangible culture has met with mixed reactions from the academic community—ranging from hesitant support of the goals and measures all the way to harsh rejection of the concept as vague, unscientific, politically reactionary, and dangerous. Some scholars see the Convention as resulting from the work of anthropologists, sociologists, and folklore scholars who have not recognized or considered the findings of their colleagues in recent decades (Duvignaud et al. 2004; Hemme, Tauschek, and Bendix 2007; Kockel and Nic Craith 2007; Smith and Akagawa 2009).

A number of studies deal with the political and economic consequences of heritage management (Bendix 2009; Di Giovine 2009; Klamer 2004). Research is furthermore being done

on the exact mechanisms used for implementing the UNESCO standards (Aplin 2002). The notion of the list itself, central to the UNESCO paradigm, has been critically examined by Valdimar Hafstein (2009) and by participants at a conference of the French *Institut Nationale du Patrimoine* (2007).⁶

From a scientific point of view, various aspects of the Convention have come under criticism and will be discussed briefly here. One issue concerns the division between material and intangible culture. While the phrase *intangible culture* is well known and commonly used in English-speaking countries, it does not exist in the German language and is therefore not easily translated. The term refers to aspects of a culture that, unlike places or objects, do not necessarily take on or have a physical form and are consequently quite ephemeral. The closest equivalent to *intangible culture* in German is *immaterielle Kultur* (immaterial culture). Many authors discuss the impossibility of distinguishing material from immaterial culture (Munjeri 2004).

The Convention marks a break from earlier, Eurocentric ways of defining cultural heritage and is an attempt to redress past inequalities and dichotomies between North and South. However, it also implies that policies managing intangible culture are largely add-ons that have not undergone an essential rethinking of definitions and practices. The separate national lists are a sign that the 2003 Convention is not based on a more holistic understanding of cultures or cultural concepts.

The current dominance of built heritage and Western material cultural forms in UNESCO politics is in some ways a rather strange, if not ironic, development. The irony is that dominant and influential philosophical or cultural concepts in the West are based on a mind-body or mind-matter dualism that privileges mind over matter. Within this system, the “mind” and all intangible cultural expressions associated with it are regarded as “real” culture and, as such, are highly valued. That which is “behind all things,” or that which represents “the inherent quality of

things”—that is, the “spiritual”—appears more meaningful than things themselves. Accordingly, material cultural forms are regarded as somehow lowly or merely instrumental. This hierarchical way of thinking, which organizes culture into levels of higher and lesser importance, has been a constant theme in Western thought.

Quite early in cultural anthropological definitions, e.g., in those promulgated by E. B. Tylor, we find a notion of culture as “a complex whole” that must be studied in all its manifestations, from its basest material objects to the most sublime, intangible ideals expressed in cosmologies and religious symbolism (Tylor [1871] 1924:1). The relative weight of these two poles, however, has given rise to debate that has been the source of entire new schools of thought. Some anthropological researchers are convinced that material culture is merely the counterpart to mental processes, with the latter giving the former its meaning. One contemporary proponent of this position is Dawson Munjeri (2000), who concludes that the material cultural heritage is secondary: “the tangible can only be interpreted through the intangible.”

Newer tendencies within anthropology do not perpetuate the historical distinction between the material and the intangible; instead, they follow a more global approach to culture. A related discussion has been going on in German folklore studies since the 1960s, stimulated significantly by the work of Karl S. Kramer (1962, 1969, 1995). Anglist and memory researcher Aleida Assmann (1999, 2009) uses the image of fluid and solid states to identify the poles that demarcate the limits of cultural practices and forms, fields in which vivid liquid forms might crystallize into solid forms and vice versa. In the scholarship of Arjun Appadurai and Bruno Latour, the major role of objects and material culture in societal development was worked out from divergent points of view (Appadurai 1986; Latour 1995, 2005); these views have been debated vigorously ever since.

UNESCO definitions of intangible and material culture—and the dichotomy that these definitions establish—is not only in opposition to anthropological concepts but also meaningless to many indigenous groups and their cultures. As UNESCO researcher Janet Blake explains, the tangible/intangible distinction

is unacceptable to many indigenous and local cultures that are the holders of the cultural traditions that fall into this category of “intangible heritage” since it does not reflect their holistic view of culture and heritage. It also reflects a Eurocentric view of cultural heritage that has traditionally valued monuments and sites over the intangible values associated with them. (Blake 2002:8–9)

It is, again, somewhat ironic that the UNESCO Convention was created specifically as a means to include indigenous communities and their heritage. The Convention’s aim is to expand its concept of heritage beyond buildings, places, and objects and to correct its earlier bias toward Western monuments. However, there is no specific need to have separate instruments for safeguarding material and intangible heritage. On the contrary, the system of material and intangible heritage, intended to redress past inequalities, seems to create new—and perpetuates existing—dichotomies and inequalities between North and South.

In addition to dividing material from intangible, the UNESCO concept contradicts the results of recent anthropological research in other respects as well (Bendix 2007; Byrne 2009; Hertz and Gonseth 2008; Leimgruber 2008; Schneider 2005). Traditional cultural concepts, such as those that have long been represented in the social sciences, approach cultures as functional units that are homogeneous, spatially and socially definable, and relatively stable over long periods of time. This view has been thoroughly questioned in discussions initiated by Lila Abu-Lughod (1991), Eberhard Berg and Martin Fuchs (1999), James Clifford and George Marcus (1986), Ulf Hannerz (1992), Dell Hymes (1974), and others.

In the last two decades, scholars of anthropology and European ethnology have brought the processual and the interactive to the fore when discussing cultural concepts. Terms such as creation, invention, production, or construction often appear in these studies. They lay out an image full of dynamism, fusion, impurity, hybridity, and transnational flows (Allolio-Näcke 2005; Appadurai 1996; Hannerz 1992, 1995, 2009; Hörning and Reuter 2004; Warneken 2000; Welz 2004; Wimmer 1996). The title of Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's book *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) has become a standing expression for a scholarly consensus that "tradition" results from an active process of invention, even when in some cases it ultimately appears as "natural" and "immutable." Today, most researchers in this field acknowledge that heritage is not something that exists someplace out there, waiting to be discovered, but rather is created in a complex institutional process. Heritage can be seen as the material or intangible result of a fundamentally fictitious past, serving the ends of identity formation through the creation of a collective but selective memory (Harvey 2001; Jöhler 2002; Peckham 2003).

As in the case of tradition, "heritage" is not only invented but also marketed, thus creating ample space for tensions and competition among the individuals and collectivities involved. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has argued that intangible cultural heritage is not simply a cultural production like any other, because people "performing ICH" are not only objects of cultural production (i.e., "cultural carriers") but also agents in the heritage enterprise itself. Hence, heritage interventions change the relationship between people and what they do and the fundamental conditions for cultural production and reproduction (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004a, 2006; Tauschek 2007).

What is true for heritage in general is, of course, also true for intangible heritage. UNESCO language and policy seem to overlook this fact, creating what one author terms the "authentic illusion" (Skounti 2009). The tried-and-true image of a culture formed from relatively

stable and closed communities and seemingly automatically at hand emerges in the Convention. This model leaves practically no room for complex processes, differentiations, and analyses either within such communities or in the connection or exchange between the most diverse groups. The heritage concept apparently works only if its performative origin is systematically forgotten or suppressed.

Bortolotto counters this criticism by maintaining that an analysis of the UNESCO documents shows that in many respects, the organization has integrated more open, processual, and fluid conceptualizations of culture (Bortolotto 2007). For example, the 2003 Convention makes no mention of “authenticity” when defining cultural heritage. This position was explicitly reaffirmed in the Yamato Declaration on Integrated Approaches for Safeguarding Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO 2004). And a UNESCO Web page accessed in 2009 insisted that while the Convention refers to communities and groups of tradition bearers, “the governmental experts who prepared the draft of the Convention [stressed] that such communities have an open character, that they can be dominant or non-dominant, that they are not necessarily linked to specific territories and that one person can very well belong to different communities and switch communities.”⁷

The Convention itself accepts that intangible heritage forms and resources “are constantly being recreated” (UNESCO 2003b) and are therefore constantly changing. But despite the general encouragement to create lists that are as inclusive and diverse as possible, it is apparent that admission to the list of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity strongly depends on the duality of “authentic” versus “inauthentic” heritage forms. Debates between applicants, adversaries, and rival competitors mainly circle around the fear that one’s heritage could somehow lose its originality, uniqueness, or exceptional universal value. The mere possibility could put one’s application or one’s world heritage title in jeopardy (Bendix 1977, 2007; Lindner

1998; Seidenspinner 2006). There is a great danger that heritage politics could lead to the conservation, preservation, and museumification (if not mummification) of intangible culture, because any change to intangible heritage will raise the question of how this changed cultural element is related to the one that got the UNESCO heritage label.

The Term *Volkskultur*

Another consequence of the heritage concept is that it again places a strong focus on group-oriented, ethnically or nationally defined culture. This focus can be seen as natural, but it has the effect of creating closed-off and clear-cut borders against outside communities. UNESCO's tendency to define—and think of—heritage in spatial metaphors impedes its understanding of the fact that it is in the very nature of intangible culture to remain undetermined by fixed location. Without denying the importance that space has in shaping cultural practices, it can be said that culture lives via social processes that, while indeed playing out in physical space, extend far beyond that range by encompassing embodied, verbal, visual, and virtual interactions.

The German-speaking world has to contend with the added problem that intangible culture is often equated with *Volkskultur*. In German usage this word is quite specific and therefore cannot really be translated, but it can be associated with such terms as *traditional culture* and *folklore*, which play an important role in the history of the Convention but have also elicited criticism. In 1989, UNESCO adopted a Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore. The document defines *folklore* and *traditional culture* as

the totality of tradition-based creations of a cultural community, expressed by a group or individuals and recognized as reflecting the expectations of a community in so far as they reflect its cultural and social identity; its standards and values are transmitted orally, by imitation or by other means. Its forms are, among others,

language, literature, music, dance, games, mythology, rituals, customs, handicrafts, architecture and other arts. (UNESCO 1989)

Few member states have adopted the 1989 Recommendation, and key criticism was leveled at the rather narrow way folklore had been defined. These early definitions of intangible heritage refer to its traditional or indigenous nature. However, the terms are problematic because

they imply that intangible heritage occupies the same discursive space as “primitive culture” or its derivative, “folklore.” This constructs a view of intangible heritage as old, pre-industrial, unchanging or relatively stable over time, related to an ethnic identity (especially a marginalised or non-Western one) and regionally specific.

(Deacon et al. 2004:29)

Some years later, the widely criticized 1989 Recommendation was replaced with a new statement that refers to “peoples’ learned processes along with the knowledge, skills and creativity that inform and are developed by them, the products they create, and the resources, spaces and other aspects of social and natural context necessary to their sustainability” (UNESCO 2001:6).

At the thirty-second UNESCO General Conference on October 17, 2003, in Paris, the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage was adopted. An early version of the document suggests how sweeping the definition of intangible heritage has become:

The “intangible cultural heritage” means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated with them—that communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their historical conditions of existence, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting

the respect of cultural diversity and human creativity. (UNESCO 2003a)

While the UNESCO definition of intangible culture has been expanded and now puts emphasis on cultural processes and developments, many countries use the Convention to further a view of heritage that is still deeply connected with conventional ideas about folklore and traditional culture.

This tendency is equally true in the Swiss context. In these discussions, words like *folklore*, *tradition*, and *customs* were used time and again, but it was the term *Volkskultur* that was employed most frequently—a term that, from a social scientific perspective, appears problematic for various reasons. On September 12, 2006, the Swiss UNESCO Commission convened a conference in Bern. The plan was to inform an interested public about the upcoming process of ratifying the two UNESCO conventions by the Swiss Parliament. The title of the event was “What is the future of ‘Volkskultur’ in the Switzerland of tomorrow?” As a phrase, *intangible culture* was omitted from the invitation altogether.

In the German language, *Volk* can refer both to ethnic or national affiliation (*das deutsche Volk* [the German people], *das schweizerische Volk* [the Swiss people]) and to a broad lower strata distinct from an elite (as conveyed by the English *folk*). The German term always resonates with both meanings. Additionally, *Volkskultur* is traditionally understood in the sense of rural, pre-industrial, and essentially peasant culture. Since the nineteenth century it has been the term preferred by cultural politicians and cultural transmitters. On the one hand, these advocates propagated national ideals and, on the other, they positioned themselves against new cultural forms arising from the industrial and urbanized world and sought to preserve a culture characterized by the image of an agrarian, pre-industrial Switzerland whose traditions have exhibited continuity for ages. For each individual field—yodeling, wrestling (*Schwinger*), costume, etc.—major national organizations were established. They in turn drew up regulatory

frameworks and structures that largely prevented innovation. To this day, these organizations play a central role not only in maintaining the customs, but also, in their minds, in representing Swiss values and national identity (Bellwald 1997; Risi 2003, 2006, 2008).

Volkskultur describes a harmonious tradition-preserving community; social conflict, crises of modernization, or role models resisting contemporary ideas of equality and human rights are pushed aside in the use of the term. Even the academic subject *Volkskunde* (folklore studies) owes its name and promotion to these notions of a *Volkskultur* that needed to be scientifically collected and documented but also saved and promoted (Bausinger [1971] 1999; Bendix 1977; Brednich 2001; Kaschuba 2003).

The mixing of different connotations within the same word has turned *Volkskultur* into a scientifically problematic but nevertheless widely used term. But the use of *Volk* and *Volkskultur* in the context of nationalist and racist theories and, in particular, National Socialism, meant that after World War II the latter term became further problematic and was seen by many academics as no longer usable (Gerndt 1987; Köstlin 1984, 1995). However, it remained popular in general public usage, especially in Switzerland, where the term was less freighted with Nazi overtones than it was in Germany or Austria.

For some years now, a downright revival of the term has been discernible in Switzerland, a circumstance for which there are several explanations. Politically conservative and right-wing groups, which see Swiss values and identity threatened by the processes of migration and globalization, make frequent use of the term, using it to describe the traditions and values that need to be cultivated and safeguarded. But it is also taken up by other political organizations, such as cultural foundations, that are reacting to the recently intensified discussion of traditional cultural forms and practices. Young people and urban audiences, for example, display an increased interest in folk music—an interest which, on the one hand, often creates newer and

more innovative forms but, on the other hand, can be seen as an expression of a search for stability and familiarity in a world of rapid social change (Oehme 2008, 2009; Ringli 2006).

In 2006, Pro Helvetia, a state-financed Swiss cultural foundation whose mission is to promote cultural creations domestically and abroad, initiated the program *echos–Volkskultur für morgen* (Volkskultur for tomorrow) in order to ensure that traditional Swiss culture is more insistently taken into account in subsidies policy.⁸ The committee that served in an advisory role for the program engaged in vigorous discussions about whether to use *Volkskultur*. The term finally won out, in part to send conservative critics of cultural subsidies a signal that traditional culture would also be supported. But certainly the debate was influenced by the desire to promote new, and in some respects highly innovative, efforts in this cultural field. A danger loomed in the use of the term, namely that it would invite the participation of organizations whose notions about *Volkskultur* are both narrow and precise, who have long blocked vibrant cultural development, and who now—in their guise as the official representatives of *Volkskultur* and, by extension, as “bearers of cultural traditions”—expect financial support for their activities.

What is conspicuously absent in the use of *Volkskultur* outside a scholarly context is the lack of debate regarding its problematic, multifaceted complexity. That is, it may be used to refer to either national or traditional culture (mainly rural, pre-industrial), or a mixture in which the national is intertwined with the traditional, thus creating an image of “the people” as a homogeneous unit. In addition, there is a commercial aspect; indeed, *Volkskultur* offerings represent an added tourist value that should not be underestimated.

The use of *Volkskultur* in the first public briefing on the UNESCO Convention on intangible culture demonstrated that the UNESCO Convention was being used to strengthen the image of ancient, deeply rooted practices and to ignore the development of a modern, urbanized, and mobile society characterized by migration and globalization. This is made clear, for example,

in a statement by the vice president of the Swiss UNESCO Commission: “Behind the rather obscure term of intangible culture, one finds cultural forms which are deeply rooted in the soil [in the original French, *terroir*] and passed on from generation to generation” (Gradis 2008).

Although the pronouncements of the Federal Office for Culture and the Swiss UNESCO Commission always mention that the promotion of intercultural understanding is part of their focus, the images that emerge resonate with those common in “multicultural” discourse. In this perception, different groups promote the beautiful aspects of their culture—often dances, costumes and culinary delights—without this valorization ever leading to recognition of problems, conflicts, boundary crossings, or even the development of new, hybrid forms. Intangible culture is seen as a means of exchange with foreign countries on an informal and unproblematic basis, as well as a way to promote one’s own values and ideals. In Switzerland, given the juxtaposition of four language-regions, cultural diversity assumes quite an important discursive role. However, newer forms of cultural expression—developments in cultural diversity that were initiated by the onset of migration in the late nineteenth century and have been encouraged by increased mobility and by the internationalization of communication—remain excluded.

A logic implicit in the 2003 Convention is that a people’s intangible heritage is drawn from the common folk, who are distanced from the elite. Because these simple people, equated on a global scale with the cultures of the South—now often called “first cultures”—were and are dominated by colonial and post-colonial elites, the UNESCO Convention aims to help those who are unable to maintain and transmit their culture on their own.

This idealized dichotomy between the “common folk” and the “elite” does not apply in a Swiss context. *Volkskultur* does not separate “common folk” and “elite” but rather marks off cultural practices that possess great symbolic and political power for a variety of historical and

political reasons from other traditions practiced by groups lacking that power. Both groups, however, are richly differentiated socially. Though they span the social strata from top to bottom, they differ in political attitudes, lifestyles and, above all, in their claims to represent the identity, tradition, and culture of the “real” Switzerland. Hence, the border really runs along the line where representatives of folklore and cultural organizations—who take it upon themselves to maintain the old traditions—distinguish themselves from creative artists who are not supported by political lobbies.

In Switzerland, then, the Convention becomes an instrument for stabilizing existing imbalances and biases, strengthening—since it relies on state measures—already dominant forces while attempting to prevent other forces from being developed. The Convention is used to support those cultural traditions that do not need support because they are anchored by and function through well-developed networks and instruments. Other forms are excluded from the policy implementation process from the outset. And finally, the Convention does not even recognize certain forms of intangible culture, because neither their representatives nor the political actors consider them relevant to the Convention, since they are not defined as traditional, rooted in a specific community, or identified as specifically Swiss.

The role of the social sciences in this process of political negotiation is striking. Representatives of various disciplines (folklore studies, anthropology, cultural studies, etc.) with a longstanding history of researching cultural policy and tradition—how traditions develop, are constructed and transmitted—were virtually excluded from discussions. Those invited as “tradition bearers” were primarily representatives of well-connected organizations active in such forms as yodeling, Schwinger, and folk dance. In addition, associations of creative artists were also involved; these participants demonstrated a great interest in the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression (UNESCO 2005), almost always

discussing it together with the 2003 Convention. They saw them as an opportunity to strengthen copyright provisions and also recognized legislative possibilities that prevented unrestricted access to an open market, which, in their eyes, threatened entire areas, such as film production.

Representatives from the academy, by contrast, participated in some events only because these were public occasions, but they were almost never represented in the preparatory and lead groups. What remained unacknowledged was the fact that major collecting, safeguarding, and research activities—some of which had been performed for over a hundred years by a variety of museums and academic institutions and in part still are—formed the basis for the very existence of available materials and knowledge about cultural forms. Absent in the documents, for example, are references to the role of linguistics in researching dialects and preparing corresponding dictionaries, to song and music archives for providing a wealth of data for use by all interested individuals, or to museum collections that provide evidence about cultural developments of various kinds.

What was conspicuous at the event was a sometimes almost naive understanding of culture, which in no way tackled the processes by which knowledge is passed on and used and—in whatever form—always exploited. This understanding is certainly not a consequence of the UNESCO Convention, but the treaty's emphasis on the role of the "bearers" and the omission of those who could make a reflexive contribution may well increase its effect. Also in evidence was a certain negative, sometimes nearly aggressive, attitude toward scientific or scholarly statements. Representatives of the "bearer groups" who did not want to deal with issues of stability and variability, the homogeneity and heterogeneity of cultural traditions, or their own unity and openness, saw academics as individuals who wanted to destroy and defame the ancient traditions—as "spoilsports," if not downright unpatriotic. The UNESCO Convention clearly supports the perception of intangible culture as a way to promote a stable and inclusive identity,

one that creates support and security through clear attributions and natural distinctions and can avoid the “unreasonable” demands of open, process-like, cross-cultural developments.

The somewhat outsider role of academic researchers is not a new stage in the history of folklore studies in the German-speaking world. In debates since the 1960s, folklorists in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria, who for the most part no longer call their field “folklore,” have been highly critical of Volk and Volkskultur as concepts and as tools of nationalist and racist ideologies. They see their role today less as agents of cultural practice or as participants in discussions about “public folklore” and more as critical watchdogs. But in taking this role, they run the risk of being largely excluded from the committees in which cultural concepts are implemented as political policy, as is evident in the case of the UNESCO Convention.

The ratification process in Switzerland revealed that cultural-political leaders proceeded from a conception of intangible culture that is deeply oriented to the notion of a pre-industrial, rural and traditional, static Volkskultur as the supposed representation of Swiss identity. For this reason, cultural expressions and traditions from areas of popular culture, and from sub-, migrant- or transnational cultures, have received very little notice to date.

Identity, Heritage, Globalization: Which Diversity Is Desirable?

Intangible heritage does not necessarily have to be linked to a specific regional or ethnically defined group. The examples recognized by UNESCO to date, however, demonstrate a tendency to support forms that can be clearly located and visited. The Convention contains no guidelines for dealing with transnational cultural heritage or mobile, migrating cultures. Yet it is precisely those cultures that are playing such a significant role in modern societies. Also absent is a debate on approaches to transnationalism research, which typically focuses expressly on the connections that migrants make among the various cultures in which they live, including “the

processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (Basch, Schiller, and Blanc [1994] 2000:7; Hannerz 1996).

By contrast, the relationship between “global consciousness” (as evidenced in UNESCO’s heritage concept) and local culture is discussed in various studies (Cleere 2001; Kearney 2009). Globalization is seen by some as a welcome opportunity, particularly for small, indigenous communities. Conversely, other authors see the concept of intangible cultural heritage as the “new evil” and a threat to cultural diversity. The harshest criticism detects nothing less than a dominance of hegemonistic Western culture in the heritage concept (Hall 2005; Meyer-Rath 2007). Very few researchers emphasize the dialectical context in which globalization is seen as a prerequisite for the increasing intensity and emphasis on local, particularistic attitudes.

Another point has so far hardly been mentioned in the discussion: the connection between cultural diversity and social change. The Convention stresses its intent to promote only intangible cultural heritage that doesn’t contradict “existing international human rights instruments [or] the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development” (UNESCO 2003b, Article 2; see also Silverman and Ruggles 2007). The claim to cultural diversity is politically established; it collides of necessity with the equally political injunction to recognize human rights and universal norms and values. Cultural practices are always linked to social and economic structures and thus to issues of societal norms and justice. If one wishes to protect and promote them, one would, in principle, have to safeguard the associated socioeconomic fundamentals (Hertz and Gonseth 2008). But no such idea is mentioned in the UNESCO documents—and rightly so. The consequences would likely be cultural protection zones intended to protect everyday life in the same way that nature preserves hope to safeguard an entire flora and fauna. The members of “protected” communities would

have to be encouraged to live in accordance with their respective sociocultural (caste) systems and even to continue their traditional work, production, trade, and consumption techniques. This idea is absurd in a world order characterized by global penetration and increasing dominance of capitalist economies. But it is also problematic in view of the continued call for a global acceptance of human rights, because many existing cultural forms are incompatible with the demands of the modern conception of human rights. And this discrepancy concerns not only traditional forms of society, but also more contemporary forms in which discriminatory behavior is glorified or trivialized, where racism, sexism, ageism, class conflict, and other “unpopular” or “rough” social forces are expressed culturally (Hertz and Gonseth 2008). The separation of cultural forms from their socioeconomic environments, however, diminishes the significance of the former, which no longer function as a dynamic part of everyday life. Instead, they become museumized and defunctionalized forms devoid of any identity-building meaning for the practitioners, though perhaps offering an added tourist value.

This connection between social systems and cultural practices makes it clear why potential tradition bearers and international cultural organizations need not share the same perspective and why serious conflicts may develop. Of course, there can be no question with regard to advocating the preservation of cultural practices that contradict human rights. Yet, one must keep in mind that as a result of this political positioning cultural heritage is not preserved from a perspective of cultural diversity and the greatest possible autonomy and self-determination of the groups in question, but is subject to another logic, one that obeys the laws of international politics and can run entirely counter to the social logic of the respective communities.

Raw, discriminatory, insulting, or degrading forms of cultural expression should be taken seriously as manifestations of societal fault lines and conflict zones—taken seriously not in the sense of contented acceptance, but in the sense of critical analysis. With respect to this latter

context, culture has the role that we should concede from a cultural anthropological perspective: it comprises people's ability to deal with their everyday lives and to give meaning to them, which of course may also mean arriving at ideas and statements that contradict standards of human rights.

The promotion and cultivation of unproblematic, traditional forms of culture may also serve to divert people from societal developments with fundamental consequences, conveying to them an image of an ideal world and a stable, united community, even as globalization processes are fundamentally changing society and leading it into manifold conflicts. Heritage politics and programs would then in some ways function as a sedative.

Media, Mobility, Embodiment, Performance

The concept of intangible cultural heritage implicitly evokes a separation between "traditional societies" and an unspecified other. This unnamed something appears as modern society, in which knowledge, practices, and conceptions of the world are no longer passed on orally from generation to generation, but are transmitted in other ways. Furthermore, the role of cultural heritage is represented in an idealized way, providing its members "with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity" (UNESCO 2003b, Article 2). In modern societies such as Switzerland's, the implementation of intangible cultural heritage policy depends upon a similar dividing line, one that since the beginning of the modern era has been drawn between rural and urban, common and elite, handicraft and industry. Intangible cultural heritage is assumed to belong virtually exclusively to the former. But all of these factors are, in fact, intertwined. It was modern society that first created a need for tradition and identity-anchoring, which in turn gave rise to all those organizations whose mission it is to maintain associated cultural forms. The premodern past is

designed and squared accordingly. The world of tradition and stability obtains its specific quality only through the existence of the modern, industrialized, urbanized, medialized, and quickly changing world and is quite simply inconceivable without it.

In analyzing the Convention, one must account for the fact that heritage is not something that was simply always there, but rather that safeguarding certain cultural forms is a consequence of the clash over cultural supremacy. Heritage and memory are always bound up with loss, surrender, disappearance, and oblivion, part of a complex social process whose outcome is always the result of the might and dominance of particular groups. UNESCO and the infrastructures established by its conventions can be counted among these forces. The different lines of memory are merged into one single line, dictated by political power that decides what is worth being called heritage and what is not.

Contrary to UNESCO ideology, which favors locality, rootedness, and tradition, many cultural processes of modern societies are closely linked to globalization, mobility, innovation, and popular culture—in short, with the history of the last couple of centuries. These practices clearly also correspond to the criteria for tradition-building as UNESCO understands it, yet they remain largely unnoticed. The UNESCO paradigm seems to follow the assumption that the transmission of information from generation to generation takes place mainly in oral form. Cultural forms in highly industrialized countries, however, frequently cannot be understood without the inclusion of media beyond the oral tradition, media that has played a critical role for some time (Kalay, Kvan, and Affleck 2008). This includes not only the centuries-old written tradition but also, above all, the rapid development of technical media since the late nineteenth century. Cultural transmission cannot be understood without taking into account the role of cinema, phonographs, radio, television, the Internet and other derived forms and variants, media that are not unilaterally passive, but to a great degree active shapers of cultural practices.

For example, the presence of new media does not simply lead to the loss of tradition, as is often claimed, but can also serve as a source of inspiration and revitalization. Depending on the format, these cultural forms of transmission affect and interconnect different senses, whether verbal, visual, body-sensory, virtual, etc. Media products (texts, recordings, clips) are picked up by cultural operators and developed further; they become part of a process in which lines of tradition are continued and new cultural forms arise. Today, the Web and related digital technologies most clearly represent the possibilities of cultural media usage.

In his scholarship on the reproducibility of artwork, Walter Benjamin asserted that the increasing availability of cultural works led to a certain “democratization” of art, but at the same time he worried that mechanical reproduction and rendering could destroy the aura of artworks—their character as unique objects (see Benjamin 2008). This fear also appears, in modified form, in discussions about cultural heritage. Uniqueness and aura, which are concepts strongly linked to the search for origins and roots, serve as filters that determine the essential value of cultural works through time and space by radically distinguishing between original and copy. The definition of cultural heritage is thus strongly associated with concepts that are of central significance for so-called high or elite culture. Conversely, this separation into “original” and “copy” often makes little sense—both in traditional, orally transmitted forms of culture, and in the age of on-demand reproduction, copying, and downloading. For all these reasons, an in-depth analysis of the role of media, transmission, editing, and sampling would be desirable for understanding the phenomenon of heritage efforts and for seeking possibilities for promotion and dissemination that correspond to the criteria and practices of the respective bearer groups.⁹

The body plays an equally important role in the transmission of culture. In contrast to the material heritage protected in the museum, intangible cultural heritage consists of manifestations (knowledge, skills, performance) that are inextricably linked to persons. With terms like “living

human treasure,”¹⁰ the physical body of the craftsman or artist is assigned the role of archive or storehouse of traditional knowledge—he or she becomes a kind of repository for the threatened intangible. This concept runs into obstacles not only when it portrays the skills of the individual craftsman as “representative” of a cultural community or “collective,” but also because finite human lives cannot offer permanent protection. Furthermore, people are the subjects as well as the objects of cultural traditions: they function not only as transmitters but also as agents of their own heritage enterprises. Missing from the conventions is this prospect of a conscious, reflexive subject. Instead, creative artists appear as bearers and transmitters of traditions or are used as passive media or as bearer strata devoid of will, intent, or creativity. However, each individual’s practice also represents an active examination and the assumption of his or her own viewpoint (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2006).

Consequently, the role of the individual must always be considered from the perspective of the active, performative subject. The roles of the body, physical practice, and embodiment are illuminated too unilaterally in the framework of the Convention (Barba and Savarese 1991; Csordas 1999). It stresses the role of individuals as keepers of a “repertoire” but focuses too little on the performance, so to speak—on how this repertoire is maintained and transmitted. The concept of performance draws attention to issues of context, intent, resources, conventions and relationships among social actors. Victor Turner introduced the term “social drama” in order to draw attention to the performative aspects of human action, with its elements of play and creativity. Performance addresses intentionality and expressivity in human behavior (Grossegger 2005; Köpping 1998; Turner 1982, 1990). Key terms used when describing performances are “expression,” “experience,” and “interpretation,” which seem to follow a kind of never-ending loop: the expression of something as experienced by others, who then interpret this experience, leading in turn to a new expression (Bell 2008; Hughes-Freeland 1998; Schechner and Appel

1990; Schieffelin 1996, 1998). It is this performative element that distinguishes human culture bearers from recording devices and documentation systems.

Who Has the Power?

The design of the national inventories is largely at the discretion of the States Parties; the provisions of the Convention are scant. The relevant article stipulates only that one or several inventories can be created in a “manner geared to [each State’s] own situation.” The lists are regularly updated and are the subject of reports by the States Parties (Art. 12), who “endeavor to ensure the widest possible participation of communities [and] groups . . . that create, maintain and transmit such heritage” (Art. 11, subparagraph b; Art. 15).

In Switzerland the principle of subsidiarity also comes into play: only political responsibilities that cannot be managed at the lower level are delegated to the next higher level. Many issues are therefore first the responsibility of individual communities, which cede certain spheres to the cantons, which, in turn and if necessary, pass them on to the federal government. Cultural policy is primarily a matter for the municipalities and cantons; only in a few areas does the federal government play a more important role.

This procedure implies that the federal government plays a secondary role in promoting culture, both financially and substantively. The Federal Office for Culture is responsible for certain key areas in the field—international relations, the Swiss film industry, and the National Library, Archive, and Museum. A second large institution, Pro Helvetia, a federally funded cultural foundation, also supports original creations in the areas of theater, dance, visual arts, music, and literature. But the lion’s share of support for culture comes from the cantons and from city governments.

In this federal system, it is envisaged that the task of inventorying the intangible culture

will be borne jointly by the Confederation and the cantons. Communication by the Federal Council to the Parliament suggested the following distribution of roles: the cantons are responsible for the content of the lists; they are in charge of identifying and inventorying and, in turn, rely on proposals made by bearers of intangible cultural heritage. The federal government supports the cantons in the process by means of administrative or technical assistance. The Federal Office for Culture, as the competent specialist authority, supports the cantons in developing uniform selection criteria. The reports of the cantons are received and merged into a so-called indicative list, which has no legal effect whatsoever. Therefore, the cantons decide which cultural areas are worthy of belonging to the list. The federal government, which assumed a leading role during the ratification process (because international agreements fall within its remit), is now ceding its role to the cantons.

Nevertheless, the role of the federal government should not be underestimated. In close cooperation with the Swiss UNESCO Commission, the cantonal authorities, and the “bearers of the cultural heritage,” the Federal Office for Culture defines the parameters of a future Swiss inventory of intangible cultural heritage. At the same time, the government is also aware that it will relinquish the lead in the future, acknowledging that federal policy cannot operate effectively in this terrain. Therefore, the accession to the UNESCO Convention must cost as little as possible. The Convention provides the federal government with a vehicle that reinforces the image of cultural diversity the Swiss government has always propagated, but without incurring great cost. For these reasons, then, it is worthwhile to tackle the Convention’s implementation in collaboration with proven, cooperative institutions who are unlikely to add topics or cultural areas that could result in higher costs.

The so-called consultation process is also typical of the Swiss legislative process, which allows all interested parties, organizations, and individuals to provide feedback on proposed laws.

The consultation process was performed prior to the ratification of both the 2003 and the 2005 Conventions. Approximately eighty individuals and organizations participated, and almost all were clearly in favor of Swiss ratification of both conventions. But a look at the participants reveals that the usual political parties and groups are the ones that spoke up. From the field of cultural workers, there were approximately one hundred or so participants present at the UNESCO Conventions Day on January 30, 2007, in Bern. They included the Swiss UNESCO Commission, Traditions pour Demain (Traditions for Tomorrow), as well as CIOFF Switzerland (International Council of Organizations for Folklore Festivals and Folk Art) and the Swiss Coalition for Cultural Diversity, which collaborate closely and have joined together in the Swiss Forum for Intangible Cultural Heritage.¹¹ These groups welcomed the conventions. As already mentioned, the name of the event ensured that many who did not view themselves as representatives of *Volkskultur* did not show up in the first place.

The Swiss plan is to draw up and publish the inventory in an electronic format. In this process a variety of issues arise concerning the organization of such a database, specifically with regard to a suitable classification grid that does justice to the diverse subject matter. Moreover, copyrights or related protection rights need to be taken into account in the inventorying and documentation of these cultural practices. In this regard, the Convention requires that existing rights and obligations not be affected (Art. 3, subparagraph b).

In preparation, the federal government has charged the Swiss branch of CIOFF, a private organization that mainly organizes international folklore festivals,¹² with the creation of a database prototype that can be tested. If one goes to the CIOFF homepage and clicks on the programs, one comes across the Schweizerisches Inventar der überlieferten *Volkskultur*. Here again we find the well-known *Volkskultur* instead of *intangible culture* (even though the English-language version of the site reads, “Swiss inventory of intangible cultural heritage”). The

database bears the apt name Edelweiss, a Swiss national flower that symbolizes the Alps and is used mainly for tourism purposes. Six photographs adorn the homepage, and all of them show people in traditional folk costumes. The greeting for the Edelweiss database itself is “Willkommen im schweizerischen Repertoire der immateriellen Volkskultur” (Welcome to the Swiss directory of intangible cultural heritage). The database on this site is referred to as Das Repertoire der Traditionsträger (in English, as “the Directory of the Actors of Cultural Heritage”). It includes the following nine types of expression: “music, theatre, regional customs, singing and yodel, dance, regional dialects, handicrafts, kitchen, national dress” (CIOFF 2010).

Particularly striking are the combinations of terms that again tie *intangible* to *Volkskultur* or replace it with this term altogether. A further oddity is the fact that a “Directory of the Actors of Cultural Heritage” is announced, which does not correspond to the intentions of the UNESCO Convention’s wish to inventory the cultural heritage but not its bearers. And lastly, it is noteworthy that the database categories belong to different levels of meaning. While “national dress” encompasses a narrow field (not to mention the fact that it’s part of material culture), the expression “customs” would instead belong on a more general level. Other areas of cultural knowledge—about the body, medicine or nature, or cosmic, transcendent and religious ideas—are missing entirely, even though they are of particularly active interest in contemporary society (CIOFF 2010). A working group comprised of federal and cantonal representatives as well as cultural organizations is now working on a list that can serve as a template for the cantons.

The implementation of the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Culture in Switzerland so far seems mainly to promulgate notions of intangible culture based on images of past, traditional, fundamentally rural traditions, which can serve as a counter-image to the development of modern society. Just as people in the nineteenth century raised concerns about the threats of modernization, industrialization, and urbanization, we have reached a point where many people

are convinced that we must safeguard, rescue, and protect whatever we can against the forces of globalization. We are again eager to collect and archive, but this time we rely less on museums and archives and more on digital databases and lists.

In general, then, due to the way in which the 2003 Convention conceptualizes culture and heritage, three crucial elements have been neglected in recent Swiss discussions: 1) cultural forms that are mobile and transnational (not clearly viewed as belonging to a specific ethnic, national, or minority group), 2) medial transmissions of popular culture, and 3) performative elements of culture. In addition, cultural diversity is seen as positive, beautiful, and removed from working and everyday life; culture thereby becomes detached from its societal roots. As a result, many active cultural participants are only minimally involved and many feel left out by the way the Convention is being publicized.

The political power of individual States Parties will ultimately decide what is included in individual national inventories. The protection that should be granted to diversity can quickly become nothing more than a folklore cloak or, in extreme cases, be used to discredit unpopular cultural practices as unworthy of protection. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett proposes that by emphasizing the prepolitical cultural bonds of subnational groups, the heritage concept weakens the link between nationality and citizenship and instead strengthens ties to an emerging global citizenship and global policy (2006:190–91). With regard to the Convention, however, that goal is likely to be scuttled by the powerful role of States Parties. Contrary to intent, because of this type of state participation, sub- and transnational or diaspora groups are being involved only if they do not contradict the intentions of the governmental cultural policy. The notion that the Convention above all supports groups that tend to see themselves as indigenous, ancestrally oriented, or primordial probably does not apply in most cases, at least for the modern Western states. For them, the long-standing process of nation and state formation has meant that such

groups have either been integrated into the state-legitimized system and become part of the national identity and tradition narrative (and thus part of officially sponsored cultural politics) or that they have been marginalized and thus barely taken into account within the framework of the Convention.

In a country like Switzerland, the Convention also provides a cost-effective opportunity to present oneself as culture friendly and open to cultural diversity while at the same time avoiding interrogation on a number of issues. These include uncomfortable questions about the transmission and negotiation of traditions which, in an increasingly diverse, globalized, and migratory society, sometimes result in violent confrontations. The Convention also provides the opportunity to present an image of tradition and stability to one's own people and offer to international tourists an image of culture consumption as entertainment. Neither contributes significantly to a view of culture in modern society as a significant plane of engagement with the processes of identity formation, social change, and globalization, nor do they pay tribute to culture's importance in this context.

Should current trends continue, the process triggered by the UNESCO Convention will generate isolated, immobilized, but "pretty" intangible cultural forms that will become popular tourist attractions. However, these forms have little to do with the lifeways of actual communities. Intangible culture instead will become as decontextualized as the objects of material culture placed behind glass cases, on display in our museums.

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Notes

¹ Such an approach reflects the state of discussion in Switzerland, where the concept of intangible culture is still practically unknown and even the scientific debate is only just beginning.

² Text on the Swiss UNESCO website explains that the Swiss Commission “supports the causes of peace and international understanding. It defines this mission on two levels. On one, it advises the federal authorities (Parliament, Federal Council, and Federal Administration) on all of Switzerland’s relationships to UNESCO as well as their commitment in the areas of education, science, culture, and communication. On the other, it mobilizes civil society (individuals, associations, groups, institutions, private sector, mass media, politicians, etc.) to promote the values and the realization of UNESCO goals on political and legislative levels. It is thus a bridge builder between civil society and the federal authorities” (<http://www.unesco.ch/die-kommission.html>, accessed May 2, 2009; translation by the author). The thirty members of the commission were appointed by the Federal Council. The secretariat of the commission is affiliated with the Department of Foreign Affairs.

³ “The Federal Office for Culture [Bundesamt für Kultur, or BAK] promotes cultural diversity and creates the conditions for its independent growth and development. It also supports creativity in the fields of film, fine arts, and design; provides training of young Swiss abroad; and is concerned with various linguistic and cultural communities. The BAK ensures that the interests of townscape protection, monument preservation, and archeology remain safeguarded. It maintains valuable collections, libraries, and archives; runs museums; and formulates the cultural policy of the federal government. Its divisions include the Sponsorship of Culture, the Swiss National Library, and the Swiss National Museum. The BAK is a member of the Swiss Federal Department of Home Affairs [Eidgenössisches Departement des Innern, or EDI].” See

<http://www.nb.admin.ch/bak/org/auftrag/index.html?lang=de>, accessed May 2, 2009; translation by the author.

⁴ For official statements about the 2003 Convention, see <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/>. A discussion of the Convention's history can be found in Aikawa 2004; for a thought-provoking perspective on the role of UNESCO, see Turtinen 2000 and Weigelt 2008.

⁵ Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett described the process triggered by this policy, which she refers to as "metacultural" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004b).

⁶ For associated terminology, see also Van Zanten 2004.

⁷ <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?pg=00003>, accessed May 2, 2009. The text of the page ("What Is Intangible Cultural Heritage?") has since been updated. [Dr. Leimgruber: please clarify whether you accessed this on May 2, or Feb. 5.]

⁸ See <http://www.prohelvetia.ch/echos.119.0.html?&L=0>; also Risi 2006 and Antonietti, Meier, and Rieder 2008.

⁹ Fiona Cameron and Sarah Kenderline (2007) concern themselves in another way with new media and heritage, specifically by asking how digital media can be used by institutions that deal with cultural heritage.

¹⁰ See UNESCO "Guidelines for the Establishment of National 'Living Human Treasures' Systems," online at <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/00031-EN.pdf>. The document is linked to a page on the UNESCO Website entitled "Encouraging Transmission of ICH: Living Human Treasures" (<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?pg=00061&lg=EN>).

¹¹ The Swiss Coalition for Cultural Diversity (<http://www.coalitionsuisse.ch/>) is an amalgamation of organizations and covers a wide variety of cultural activities, but barely touches on the conceptual problems of intangible culture. Instead it operates in areas where cultural variety is, in

its eyes, endangered; that is, member organizations are primarily interested in the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity. The Swiss Forum for the Intangible Cultural Heritage was created to support ratification of the UNESCO Convention; as of July 2010 it did not have an autonomous Internet presence but was being managed by the Swiss UNESCO Commission and the Swiss Coalition for Cultural Diversity (<http://www.unesco.ch/themen/immaterielles-kulturerbe/das-schweizer-forum-fuer-das-immaterielle-kulturerbe.html>); http://www.coalitionsuisse.ch/doss/pci/forum_pci_de.htm).

¹² The CIOFF Switzerland Website lists the following as its objectives: “Encourage international understanding, especially in the field of folk arts, for a culture of peace and non violence according to the principles of UNESCO. Promote knowledge and esteem of peoples’ culture and traditions. Identify, promote, diffuse, and safeguard intangible cultural heritage. Cooperate with persons, groups and national or regional associations of folk art. Promote exchanges between folklore groups and representation in foreign countries by artistic groups of Swiss traditional heritage” (http://www.cioff.ch/english/objectifs_Titre_E.html).