CULTURE-BASED CURRICULUM: CULTURAL HERITAGE AND EUROPEAN IDENTITY – CHEI

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Abstract

The European integration has generated the emergence of cultural heritage at different levels – local, regional, national and, recently, European. In all its forms, cultural heritage, values and language are essential for the collective memories and sociability of groups, but also for the personal development of citizens. In this context, we propose a syllabus for European cultural studies Cultural Heritage and European Identity – CHEI, conducted in the university space, involving students from the master's cycles, focusing on the relation between culture and identity. CHEI envisages the study of European and national policies in the field of culture and national heritage, illustrating their impact on the cultural dynamics of globalization, with a centred perspective on Romanian traditional heritage.

Key words: European cultural studies, identity, national heritage

Introduction

In our society, it is obvious the increasingly acute awareness of the role played by culture in the harmonious, ecological development of a person and community, within a society of consumption and globalization. The risks of the accelerated development of society, overconsumption, uniformity, loss of authenticity have generated a return to cultural heritage. There have been initiated campaigns for exploiting traditional heritage but, many of these actions were left at the stage of information and advertising campaigns, because they cannot rebuild the connection with the authentic cultural values.

Now more than ever, European institutions understand that cultural heritage and values are at the heart of the capability of overcoming the current EU crisis which could well provide the stimulus

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for revising EU policies so as to provide a solid basis for the emergence of a truly European cultural heritage and for passing it to future generations.

The definition of culture determines how cultural policies are created. Nowadays, EU cultural policy derives from the broader definition of culture. Mainstreaming of culture, at EU level, implies that the concept of culture should be extended in as many fields as possible. A definition of culture related to EU cultural policy might be that of Edward B. Taylor (1881, p. 1): "Culture – as a complex which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws and all other provisions, attitudes acquired by man as a member of society". In this context, culture is in the process of becoming the mainstream in relation to other fields such as economy, social services, sustainable development. At present, the major directions represented in EU cultural policies are: heritage, creativity and cultural diversity, religion, finance and development.

Ileana Nicoleta Sălcudean (2013) considers that culture took a different approach in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain compared to the Western regions. The Romanian culture, Balkan and ex-communist, is influenced by the West and it has a new identity in the context of European culture (EU integration), undergoing a new process of hybridization. The concept of "cultural hybridity" is seen in Homi Bhabha's view(2002) as the influences that lead to that cultural *un-homely,* a border which opens perspectives for a new cultural stage (*apud* Sălcudean, 2013, pp. 184-186).The Romanian cultural profile is very complex and requires a specific approach. In this context, it is very important the relationship between cultural policies and education, which can put into practice, on the long term, a coherent philosophy of cultural integration.

Cultural Heritage and European Identity – CHEI – **a new culture-based curriculum**

Following the above mentioned considerations, we propose a new culture-based curriculum, *Cultural Heritage and European Identity – CHEI,* which envisages the study of European and national policies in the field of culture and national heritage, illustrating their impact on the cultural dynamics of globalization, with a centred perspective on Romanian traditional heritage. Our proposal presents the role of the EU in a globalised world and in promoting an active European citizenship and dialogue between people and cultures. The proposal core subject area is EU Intercultural Dialogue Studies, capitalizing different subject areas such as cultural anthropology, linguistics, philosophy, religion, literature, art.

CHEI equips students with knowledge of European Union cultural policies, subjects relevant for their academic and professional lives and promotes innovation in teaching and research (exploitation of the cultural patrimony as part of European identity by means of education as cultural intervention).This culture-based curriculum aims to help students acquire new knowledge regarding the relation between cultural heritage and national/European identity, its role in understanding the Other, thus realizing the importance of intercultural communication.

Thus, our proposal suggests a syllabus for European cultural studies which will be conducted in the university space, involving 150 students from philological Master studies. We propose a teaching module which contains valuable contents regarding the European and national policies in the field of culture, regarding the role of the cultural heritage in the context of European integration, activities for collecting and digitalizing the live patrimony with the involvement of the trainees, creative and experiential learning activities.

The syllabus *CHEI* contains three modules: *European and national policies in the field of culture and national heritage*; *The cultural dynamics of globalization: heritage, memory and identity*; *Traditional food heritage and European identity*.

The objectives of this syllabus are: understanding the role of the cultural heritage in communication; understanding the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity; educating students about cultural diplomacy within the context of the political, economic and cultural pillars upon which sustainable international relations are based; identifying the means to combat racism, prejudice, xenophobia, discrimination, promoting gender equality, identifying the means to promote intercultural communication.

One other objective of our proposal is the exploitation of the Romanian cultural patrimony as part of European identity by means of education as cultural intervention. This desideratum will be achieved through building and maintaining a space for training, investigation and scientific exchange which enables the deepening of knowledge about cultural heritage. This action will result in developing a new methodology and tools of cultural education, which may facilitate the enhancement of life quality, social inclusion, and eliminate discrimination and marginalization based on cultural and/or social reasons.

CHEI contents

MODULE 1: European and national policies in the field of culture and national heritage

At the crossroads of economic and political spheres, culture facilitates social inclusion and access to a better education. It also has an impact on self-confidence and on the pride of belonging to a historical community. At the territorial level, the role of culture is essential; the European communities use culture to define their identity or, on the contrary, to mark their differences. The consequences on the image, the employment and the sustainable growth of the territories are undeniable.

Thus, the topic of the module has three directions: European directives relating to culture, their role in the Romanian cultural policies and how national and European identity is constructed in the process of creating policies.

Module structure:

1. Culture and its importance in Europe

2. History of European cultural policies. Open Method of Coordination

3. Identity and diversity in EU. The policies of cultural heritage

4. The role of cultural policy in the creation of a united Europe

5. The relation between European cultural policy and national cultural politics

6. National identity vs. European identity

7. European and regional dimension in European cultural policies

8. Culture as a means of social inclusion

9. Culture and European cohesion policy

10. Cultural policy and regional attractiveness

11. European Cultural Policy and Inclusive Cultural Democracy

12. Culture and sustainable growth

13. Romanian strategy for culture and national cultural heritage, for the period 2014-2020

14. Culture, values, perceptions: analysis on the Eurobarometer: • Special Eurobarometer 237, *Europeans and Languages (2005),*• Special Eurobarometer 251, *The Future of Europe (2006),* •

Special Eurobarometer 278, *European Cultural Values (2007),*• Special Eurobarometer 296, *Discrimination in the European Union - Perceptions, Experiences and Attitudes (2008),*• Eurobarometer 69, *The European Union and its Citizens, (2008),*• Special Eurobarometer 307, *The Role and Impact of Local and Regional Authorities Within the European Union (2009).*

Impact

This module completes the students' knowledge regarding the EU cultural policies. The primary impacts of this course are the acknowledgement of future European employees of the role and effects of intercultural communication on European identity. On the long term, an important impact of the course will be the elimination of obstacles between nations and cultures, but also the elimination of the fear of losing national identity after integrating in the EU.

The attempt to identify practical problems, theoretical and political associated with the cultural policy-making in Europe and in Romania contribute to a better understanding of the potential of cultural investment at local and regional level.

MODULE 2: The cultural dynamics of globalization: heritage, memory and identity

How people, social groups and ethnic communities respond to the natural and social environment is dictated by cultural heritage and the relation between identity and alterity. Social image and self-image in the process of historical becoming, image in the relations among people, between people and institutions, in the relations among institutions, in interethnic and inter-confessional relations is shaped based on cultural accumulations.

Module structure:

1. Globalization, regionalism and national specificity

2. Globalization and integration. Cultural globalization

3. Ethnicity. Nation – nationalism. Racism – neo-racism – anti-racism

4. Identity and national conscience

5. Centre – periphery. Marginality – marginalization. Crossbreeding

6. On alterity.

7. Memory and European cultural heritage

8. The European Union – Identity construct. Mentalities, symbols, stereotypes, myths; collective representations; the relation of people to mythical heroes from the perspective of schizomorphous and isomorphous structures

9. Romanian cultural heritage and identity discourse

10. Prejudices, beliefs; the influence of collective mentalities upon social images; Mentality and taboo

11. Romanian traditional imaginary; images of the quotidian; spatiality and temporality in the traditional/folk environment and intellectual environment; sacred/profane time and space; life and death; the household (human rural and urban settlements and housing)

12. The traditional bestiary; licit and illicit professions; costume and image

13. Images of the supernatural; the supernatural in the Christian view; symbols of Christian representation

14. Characteristics of Romanian deontology

Impact

The module aims to handle students with the skills necessary to critically analyse contemporary society tending towards integration in the context of diversity. The incorporation of relevant information from the perspective of European studies is another important impact of this course.

MODULE 3: Traditional food heritage and European identity

In the space of traditional food more than in any other domain, each community has historically accumulated layers of popular knowledge, resulted from the interaction with the environment and the living conditions. This traditional knowledge, as cultural heritage, leads to the creation of "European edible identities". The aim of this course is to present the role of traditional food heritage in the context of European integration, as relevant tool in social cohesion and a social and community development factor, contributing to the elimination of tensions and social exclusion. It represents the expression of (individual, group, regional, national etc.) identity and, equally, of diversity and difference, essential values and fundamental rights.

Module structure

1. Introduction: food as national/European cultural heritage

2. Food stereotypes, global and local identities

3. Food, symbolism and religion

4. Edible authenticities. Reinventing edible identities

5. Between habit and nostalgia: Migrants' food

6. Food, identity, advertising. Self-representations in food blogs

7. Food as tourist attraction: anthropologist's view on niche tourism practices

8. European/Romanian gastronomic discourse

9. The digitization of local traditional food knowledge

10. Local traditional food

11. Local food ritual behaviour

12. Local traditional culinary tools

13. Haute traditional cuisines. UNESCO's List of Intangible Heritage

14. Romanian policies to promote food cultural heritage

Impact

The individual activity of documentation from written sources will be doubled by an investigation in the rural community which may complete the documentation on the local traditional food, local food ritual behaviour and local traditional culinary tools. The products of experiential learning will be 50 articles on the signs of traditional food culture, which will constitute the basis for a cultural encyclopaedia of traditional food, discovered by young people. The purpose for creating this cultural encyclopaedia will be not only to inform the wide public on the authentic Romanian traditional food culture, but also to educate it with a view to exploiting the inherited food patrimony, in the spirit of equity and tolerance.

Methodology

From a didactical perspective, the curriculum *Cultural Heritage and European Identity – CHEI* contains three modules, which add up to 84 hours/ academic year. This schedule will focus on a process of learning from the general to the particular, with a thorough understanding of the knowledge accumulated. The pedagogical methods will be the following: debates on the provided bibliography and case studies; the students will have to identify the key points and draw the conclusions; inviting cultural professionals (a methods seldom used in Romania); simulations of

EU cultural policy decision-making; research projects, either collective or individual (especially for capitalization of the traditional and European food heritage); role-play by staging hypothetical situations regarding the need to develop intercultural dialogue.

CHEI contents transfer

The European Agenda for Culture, launched in 2007, argues that cultural sector is an indispensable element for reaching the strategic objectives of the Union in terms of prosperity, solidarity and security[2]. In this context we propose the organization of a face-to-face reunion with the topic *Culture and sustainable growth*, between students and professionals and representatives within the civil society. Proposing the Roundtable debate *Culture and sustainable growth* was based particularly on this premise, which also substantiates the *Sectorial strategy in the domain of culture and national patrimony for the period 2014-2020*[3], according to which culture is not a secondary dimension of the socio-economic development, it is part of the very social tissue on which relies the building of any development strategy. The students can address direct questions to professionals in the field about the manner in which their institution promotes culture as an instrument of European integration regional sustainable growth. Their discussions, backed by arguments and solutions can support the undertakings of the civil society groups. Students will have the possibility to speak to professionals within the region, regarding their responsibilities concerning the way in which culture and European values can contribute to the progress of the contemporary world. They will speak about the way to access European funding and they will have the possibility to find out the professionals' main problems.

Conclusions

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[2] See *First-ever European strategy for culture: contributing to economic growth and intercultural understanding, Bruxelles, 10 May 2007* – http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/646&format=HTML&aged=0&language=RO&guiLanguage=en, retrieved January, 25, 2016; See also the Document of the Council of the European Union – *Council conclusions on the contribution of culture on local and regional development*2010, p. 7 – available online – http://eur-   lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:175:0001:0004:RO:PDF,retrieved January, 25, 2016.
[3]http://www.cultura.ro/uploads/files/STRATEGIA_%20SECTORIALA_IN_DOMENIUL_CULTURII_2014-2020.pdfretrieved in January 2016.

The syllabus CHEI, whose general objective is presenting European and national policies in the field of culture and national heritage, illustrating their impact on the cultural dynamics of globalization, provides people with the chance of improving their cultural knowledge and habits of a healthy lifestyle, in order to access performance in circumstances of full equity of professional chances. Therefore, it promotes interculturality seen as the understanding, knowledge, assumption, appreciation, exploitation and promotion of the culture of origin, completed by respect, appreciation, exploitation and of the other's culture, based on knowledge and understanding its most authentic and profound layers.

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