The Actors Involved in the Process of Cultural Heritization in Camino de Fisterra-Muxía (Camino de Santiago) and Costa da Morte, Spain: Roles of Coordinators of Local Cultures and Their Activities

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This paper, based on interviews with local informants and field observations, will examine the activities and social role of “coordinators of local culture” by focusing on two cases of the process of patrimonialización (heritization) in Spain, i.e., Camino de Fisterra-Muxía and Costa da Morte. The former is a prolonged part from the consecrated place Santiago de Compostela and the latter is an underdeveloped littoral zone, located in Galicia. The phrase “coordinators of local culture” is an analytical concept and refers to individuals who as their profession, coordinate museums, research cultural local heritage, and promote both, targeting a certain area, and who belong to an association affiliated with St. James Pilgrimage Ways. Both cases have already been analyzed by Herrero Pérez [2006] through associations that are crucial actors of the process. However, I will concentrate on a more micro level, “coordinators of local culture”, and discuss the multiple-meanings of a cultural heritage and the system observed in the process of becoming a heritage from simple local resources.

First, we will find in the activities of local cultural coordinators the enterprise to crystallize their strong “nostalgia” applying their proper skill, method and knowledge to convert local resources to cultural heritage. From this perspective, the real meanings of cultural heritage can be comprehended, which are not only collective memories but also involve a very private sense in spite of its public character.

Next, we can comprehend the indispensable element of particular leaders as “coordinators of local culture” through the system of heritization. They can realize their desire to change a negative local situation. The crucial character of these leaders is not their strong “desires” but their skill by constructing a logical and rational strategy to make them become reality.

By these findings, this article represents an attempt to consider multiple aspects of cultural heritage and different meanings from what the phrase “cultural heritage” generally includes –the public authorized concept–, not from the perspective of the collective level, but rather by focusing on individuals, the “coordinators of local culture”.

Key words: coordinators of local culture, Galicia, patrimonialización (process of heritization), subject