

## **Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage: Problems and Interpretations**

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(Summary)

The author has based this text on her experience as a scholar in the field of folklore studies and anthropology as well as on her involvement as an expert in the sphere of intangible cultural heritage. Added to this experience are her impressions of events in the social and media space in Bulgaria – events that happened during the last two-three years. The paper is structured in three sections: *Concept, Heritage, and Protection*.

In the first section the author focuses on the emergence of the concept *intangible cultural heritage* and its content according to UNESCO Convention 2003. Then the attention is directed towards its ambiguous reception in Bulgaria – disagreement with its use as a “substitute” for *folklore* and *folklore culture*; using the concept as a synonym of *spiritual culture* and thus replacing its essential meaning; further spreading it in the public domain in the last years and the direct connection of this fact to the cultural policies in the sphere of intangible cultural heritage.

The second section accentuates certain considerable discrepancies between the essence of intangible cultural heritage and the ways of imagining it: the intangible cultural heritage in Bulgaria includes traditional knowledge, skills and activities of all ethnic and confessional communities residing on the territory of the state, not only Bulgarians; it is related to practicing skills and activities typical for the modern culture as well, not only the traditional; authored interpretations of various traditional texts – song lyrics, instrumental, dance, ritual, plastic for the needs of folklore bands and ensembles are not considered intangible cultural heritage.

In the third section the author highlights a few new priorities in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage accentuated by the Convention 2003. She compares the popular folk art gatherings from the second half of the XX c. to the program “Living human treasures” initiated in 2008, that has not yet reached its full potential due to a number of deficiencies in its organization.

In addition the paper draws attention to the supremacy of ostentation and prestige seeking at the expense of responsibility in the attitude of different institutions in regard to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.

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