

European Capitals of Culture as Cultural Meeting Places - Strategies of representing Cultural Diversity

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English abstract

The European Union nominates cities as European Capitals of Culture in order to highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as to promote greater mutual acquaintance between European citizens. For the chosen cities, the nomination creates a possibility to promote the cultural identity, originality and diversity of the region and city. The empirical focus of the article is on three cities which were chosen as European Capitals of Culture for 2010 (Pécs in Hungary), and 2011 (Tallinn in Estonia and Turku in Finland). The cities utilize various strategies in emphasizing and representing their cultural diversity. All of the cities stress their location as a historical meeting place of different ethnicities and nationalities. Additionally, the cities stress their architecture as an expression of multicultural layers of the cities. In the cities, cultural diversity is related to the global imagery of popular culture, street culture and contemporary art. In addition, the cities stress the canon of Western art history as a base for common Europeanness compounded of various nationalities and regionalities. One essential strategy is to represent different minorities and their visual culture as signs of cultural diversity. Cultural diversity is a complex and political concept. Its definitions and representations inevitably involve power structures and production of cultural and political hierarchies. Hierarchies and political tension are bound to the concept even though it is often introduced as equal and anti-racist discourse.

Keywords: Cultural diversity, Discourse, European Capitals of Culture, Multiculturalism, Pécs, Tallinn, Turku

Celebrating cultures in Europe

Since 1985, the European Union has nominated cities as European Cities of Culture in order to promote the wealth, diversity, and shared characteristics of European cultures, and to improve mutual understanding among citizens of Europe. Since 1999, the chosen cities have been called European Capitals of Culture. The European Capital of Culture program is an ideological construction, which comprises profoundly political content on the local, regional and national levels. The recent past of the European Union has been characterized by discussions on growth and further political unification of the member states. The unification process, which has often been discussed in political, economic and geographical terms, also has a cultural counterpart embedded for example within the ideology of the European Capitals of Culture program. However, some writers have seen cultural issues, such as the European Capital of Culture program as having only minor political ambition in the unification policy of EU (e.g. Landry 2001, pp. 27-29). Even though the cultural budget of the EU is relatively small compared to other expenses of the union, cultural issues have political and ideological significance. The ideological dimension is clearly expressed and internalized in the European Capital of Culture program. Through the program, art and culture are being considered as a unification factor in the rhetoric and ideology of the European Union. Thus, besides the locality, regionality and nationality the European Capital of Culture program consciously and unconsciously produces and promotes 'Europeanness', and European identities.

The European Capital of Culture program enables the cities to present and promote the originality and special features of various cultural unities. Additionally, it enables the cities to propose how the different cultural unities and their features meet, flourish side-by-side, and influence each other. The latter possibility can be explored and discussed with the concept of cultural diversity. The emphasis of the program of highlighting "the richness and diversity of European cultures" (Decision 1419/1999/EC) refers to a discourse in which the concept of cultural diversity has an essential role. This discourse is fostered in the EU's decisions, instructions and evaluation criteria of the European Capitals of Culture program. Thus, the discourse is also followed in the language, visualizations and practices of the cities applying for and obtaining the title. However, the strategies of applying and using this discourse vary in the different European Capitals of Cultures.

The empirical focus of the article is on three cities which were chosen as European Capitals of Culture for 2010 (Pécs in Hungary), and 2011 (Tallinn in Estonia and Turku in Finland). Istanbul and Essen, which were also chosen as the European Capitals of Culture for 2010, are not included in the main focus of the article. The three cities included in the article differ greatly in terms of their social, cultural, economic and political histories. However, the cities also do have several common characteristics – for example, all the cities have been flourishing trade and cultural centers and multilingual forces of their regions since the Middle Ages. Two of them are, or have historically been, capital cities (Tallinn and Turku). Today, they are also characterized by their bilingual populations. Two of the cities (Tallinn and Pécs) are located in former socialist countries. During the last decade, the east-west perspective has lost its former meaning and brought new contents to the old division. However, the former division has reflected the cultural political objectives and practices in the cities. For example, renewing the cultural infrastructure has been a much discussed topic in former socialistic countries after the change of the political system. Nevertheless, the contemporary cultural political strivings in all the cities in case often follow similar kinds of objectives. In all the cities, contemporary art and culture has been developed together with the old urban layers through public art, artistic events, new museums, and various other art and culture

institutions, as well as new or renewed architecture. Despite their differences, all the cities have followed the same instructions and criteria formulated by the EU in order to apply for the title of the European Capital of Culture. Thus, the discussions, definitions and depictions of cultures and identities in the three cities also follow a similar pattern.

The driving question in my article is: How is the concept of cultural diversity adapted and applied to the notion of culture of the three European Capitals of Culture? I will explore the kinds of strategies the cities have used in producing the discourse of cultural diversity. Additionally, the article highlights the rhetoric and ideology of EU-policy in the present concept within the decision of the European Capital of Culture program. I will answer these questions by analysing the application books, plans, promotion, advertising and information material and programs of the cities, as well as the EU's decisions regarding the European Capital of Culture Program. The analysis of the material requires consideration of genre: the application books in addition to other advertising and promotion material tend to market the city in a positive and distinguishable way, present visions and draw outlines on the forthcoming event. Nevertheless, or because of it, the books and promotion material bring out the ideas, ideals and cultural discourses, which are being (or are aimed to be) materialized and visualized in practice during the European Capital of Culture year. The application books have been written by art and culture experts in cooperation with various cultural institutions and communities in the cities. The promotion and information material quotes and reflects the ideas and formulations of the books, sometimes even in detail. The promotion material has been produced by the management offices of the European Capital of Culture cities with advertising agencies.

The theoretical background of the article arises from approaches of social constructionism which emphasize reality as constructions produced in language, interaction and social practices. In social constructionism, language is not just an instrument in communication, but is seen as producing, justifying and changing practices in reality (Shotter 1993, pp. 6-10, 99-101; Gergen 1999). Discourse studies as a method, relies on the theoretical background of social constructionism. Even though discourse studies include several different orientations, a common point of view is in the emphasis placed on the constructed character of social entities, relations and phenomena. In the analysis, some discourses are seen to produce one version of reality, while some others produce another version (Fairclough 1992a, pp. 3-4). Critical emphasis in discourse analysis stresses linguistic choices as a use of power (Foucault 1972; Fairclough 1992b, pp. 8-9; 2001, pp. 36-63). In this article I will define discourse as a particular way of representing reality. These representations which are expressed in the application books and promotion and information material, construct the cities, their population, history and culture and European Capital of Culture events in a complex way. These representations also indicate the power positions and hierarchies which are intertwined in language use and meaning-making processes.

In discourse studies, the concept of text usually refers to a larger category than just spoken and written communication. It can be understood in the broader Barthesian sense to also contain visual representations, objects and other meaningful 'language' (Barthes 1973). Norman Fairclough has even used the concept of semiosis instead of text in his theory of discourse analysis to emphasise the complex and manifold character of meaningful expressions or 'language' (Fairclough, Jessop & Sayer 2003; Fairclough 2004a; Fairclough 2004b, p. 112). In this article, a discursive approach is used for analysing the empirical material. This material consists of published texts written in several genres and pictures. All of these representations, in addition to their communicative use, are perceived as contributing to the production of discourse.

Cultural diversity as a discourse

Cultural diversity can be understood as a hypernym, a word which combines several ways of discussing, defining and representing its focus. These discussions, definitions and representations have been conceptualized for example with the concepts of multiculturalism, interculturalism, cross-culturalism, transculturalism, cultural dialogue, cultural pluralism and cultural mosaic. The definitions of these concepts criss-cross in academic and everyday discussions. Particularly in a non-academic context, the different concepts have often been used as synonyms, or the contents of the different concepts are difficult to distinguish from one another. One of the often referred concepts in the everyday discussions and media texts is multiculturalism. It is also the most often used concept in my research material for discussing and representing cultural diversity. Thus, it seems that in my research material multiculturalism is adapted as a broader concept, which embodies various forms of cultural interaction.

The concept of multiculturalism has been defined in several ways in academic literature. Additionally, it has strong political content and is frequently used in political discussions and decision-making processes. In different contexts, the concept has its own connotations. Moreover, the concept has contradictory meanings, and the phenomena attached to it have raised considerable confrontation. In different countries, the academic and everyday discussions on the concept have greatly varied due to the different kind of history (e.g. colonialism) of the countries and the effects, which the history has had on the present day culture and society. Timo Soukola (1999, p. 2) has crystallized the content of the concept as follows: Firstly, it can be used as a term for politics referring to power conducted by government officials in relation to questions of heterogeneity of culture and ethnicity within the population. Secondly, it refers to a society which is characterized by ethnic and cultural heterogeneity. Thirdly, it can be understood as a social condition, which aims for equality and mutual respect between culturally different communities. In general, the concept refers to a variety of strategies for dealing with the cultural diversity and social heterogeneity of modern societies, as Stuart Hall (2001, p. 4) proposes. Hall has approached multiculturalism as a plural concept, which acquires various presuppositions and aims at different contexts and discourses (Hall 2000, pp. 210-211). In any case, the concept of multiculturalism is used in profoundly ideological ways. Hall (2001, p. 4) has noticed how the 'ism' in multiculturalism converts it easily into a single political doctrine which reduces and cements it. Thus, Hall (2001, p. 4) has outlined the problematics of cultural diversity, for example with the expression of the 'multicultural question'.

Several scholars have criticised the concept of multiculturalism because of its lack of analytical sharpness. It has been seen as being too vague and having lost its usefulness as an analytical instrument (e.g. Pääjoki 2004, pp. 10-11). The frequent use and multiple meanings of the concept have been seen to reduce its descriptive and explanatory content. Thus, some scholars have stressed other concepts related to the concept of cultural diversity. For example, the concepts of intercultural and cross-cultural have been used to emphasize the interaction between cultures and cultural phenomena which fuse several cultural influences, and cross cultural borders. In these views, the concept of multiculturalism is seen as stressing the borders of cultures and the particularism of separate cultures (Pääjoki 2004, p. 27). However, as several scholars have argued, the concept of multiculturalism has already been used in common and academic language for such a long time that it has become unnecessary or even difficult to omit it from discussion concerning cultural diversity and social heterogeneity (Pääjoki 2004, p. 11; Rastas, Huttunen & Löytty 2005, p. 21; Hall 2000, p. 209). In this article, I will use the concept of cultural diversity and outline it as broadly as Hall outlines

the concept of multiculturalism. The concept of cultural diversity is the best in describing the variety and heterogeneity of culture. Cultural diversity is also much more flexible as an academic concept than multiculturalism. Studying only the concept of multiculturalism would demarcate some essential discussions, rhetorics, and phenomena out of the focus of the article.

Cultural diversity is often discussed in the context of contemporary culture and society which are seen to be characterized by globalization and to merge different cultural influences. However, cultural diversity is not only a contemporary phenomenon. National cultures have always been more diverse, internally diverse, and contradictorily self-related, than has been presented in official history writing and in dominant historical myth (Hall 2001, pp. 8-9). Dominant versions of the national narratives have overplayed the unity and homogeneity of nations (Hall 2001, pp. 8-9). Several Finnish scholars have indicated that the Finnish nation and culture, which are often narrated as characterized by monoculturalism, have been profoundly diverse and culturally divided for centuries (Alasuutari & Ruuska 1999, pp. 231-232; Paasi 1998, p. 241; Ruuska 1998, p. 281; Pulkkinen 1999, pp. 133-136; Sevänen 1998, p. 342; Knuuttila 1994, p. 45). In seemingly monocultural societies, for example, social class has distinguished groups of people, their cultural behaviour and tastes in art.

The discussions on cultural diversity have spread over several areas of social life in contemporary societies. Further, they have strongly influenced the art field and aesthetics. However, in the art field and aesthetics, these discussions already have a long tradition. Bhikhu Parekh has outlined different perspectives to explain varieties of cultures within a society. He observes how already Herder, Schiller and other romantic liberals advanced an aesthetic case for cultural diversity, arguing that it creates a rich, varied, as well as aesthetically pleasing and stimulating world (Parekh 2000, p. 166). This kind of perspective often still characterises the discussions on cultural diversity in the art field and aesthetics. In addition to the tradition of the perspective, cultural diversity has been brought to the discussions in the contemporary art field through the emphasis of postmodern ideas. As a cultural discourse, postmodernism has been understood both as a symptom and a mental image of change, in which cultures are seen through the ideas of diversity, variability, richness of popular and local discourses, in addition to practices and codes which resist systematics (Featherstone 1990, p. 2; Smiers 2003, p. 125).

Since the concept of cultural diversity has multiple and contradictory contents it seems reasonable to approach the concept as a discourse. The discourse of cultural diversity forms its object every time the discourse is used and produces positions between the users of the discourse and those who are being discussed and represented in the discourse. Understanding cultural diversity in a discursive sense opens views on the meaning-making processes and use of the idea of cultural interaction in the context of European Capitals of Culture. The aim of the article is not to lean on some particular definition of the concept of cultural diversity or some of its sub-concepts, but to analyse the discursive variety of cultural diversity in the art and culture in the three European Capitals of Culture.

The discourse of cultural diversity in the EU decision on European Capitals of Culture

An essential factor influencing the discourse of cultural diversity in the European Capitals of Culture is the cultural policy of the European Union. The EU's decisions, instructions, evaluation and

selection criteria of the European Capitals of Culture have an effect on the language, plans and programs of the cities applying for and obtaining the title. Thus, the application books also reflect the rhetoric of the EU, sometimes even in detail, because it is a prerequisite for a successful application. This prerequisite makes the books, and other promotion material based on the application books, quite similar in their views on the meanings of cultural diversity.

The rhetoric used in discussing culture and identities in the European Capital of Culture program, is in itself profoundly ideological. In the decision of the European Parliament and Council 1419/1999/EC the initiative on setting up the European Capital of Culture program is seen as “important both for strengthening local and regional identity and for fostering European integration”. Promoting and encouraging locality and regionality is being paralleled with the integration process of Europe. Ideas of locality, regionality and Europeaness do not seem to clash. Interestingly, nationality is not invoked in the text - fostering European integration occurs via strengthening locality and regionality. Identity is being discursively concentrated towards a smaller unit than nation or state, rather it is being concentrated towards a region or place. In the decision, “local and regional identity” is written in singular form, which expresses it as a coherent and unproblematic entity. The objective of the European Capital of Culture program is defined in the decision to “highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as to promote greater mutual acquaintance between European citizens”. Nevertheless, European cultures are discussed in the decision in a plural form. The plurality of them is not written in terms of multiple national or regional cultures, but as “European”. Although the text emphasizes the plurality of European cultures, it still points out common features in them.

The question about cultures and identities is also presented in the request which directs the candidate cities “to promote dialogue between European cultures and those from other parts of the world” (Decision 1419/1999/EC). In the request the European cultures are seen as distinguished from cultures outside Europe. The possibility for cultural dialogue presumes an existing cultural distinction and presupposition that ‘European cultures’ are limited to the borders of Europe. Thus, the decision creates an impression that the cultures of ‘other parts of the world’ or cultures of outsiders (like immigrants) are not a part of European cultures. It also evokes an idea of pure cultures, not mixed with others. The decision refers in its rhetoric to a particular kind of strategy in terms of the discourse of cultural diversity, however without using the concepts of multicultural, intercultural or cross-cultural. The rhetoric of the decision stresses the particularist view to cultural diversity in which dialogue of cultures prerequisites existence of distinguished cultures. The decision aims to celebrate the particularist local, regional and European cultures.

These notions are in line with general theoretical and critical views on EU cultural policy. EU cultural policy has been interpreted to support the view that regional and European identities and cultures are unproblematic essential entities (Shore 1996, pp. 294-295; 2000 42-54). As Katriina Siivonen (2008, p. 106) points out, in this sense EU cultural policy seems not to stress global, heterogenic and dynamic interaction processes on the micro level, in which cultural phenomena and identification processes are constantly varied and changing. Instead, the policy stresses macro and middle level symbolic structures, such as regions, nationalities and Europe.

Strategies of cultural diversity in the three European Capitals of Culture

The discourse of cultural diversity embodies a variety of discussions and meaning-making processes which stress heterogeneous cultural interaction. Its main ideas can be approached, described, explained and represented in several ways. In this chapter, I will outline four different strategies of producing the discourse. These strategies are being used and repeated in the application books in addition to the promotion and advertising material of Pécs, Tallinn and Turku as European Capitals of Culture. Some of the cities place more emphasis on certain strategies in the production of discourse. However, all the outlined strategies exist and overlap in some way in the material of all cities. I refer to the different ways of producing the discourse as strategies, which stress the applications' political and ideological content. However, the production may be intentional or unintentional, or even the result of conscious or unconscious practice. Non-intention or unconscious character does not reduce the ideological or political power of the discourse.

As mentioned, all the cities use the concept of multicultural or multiculturalism in their application books as well as in their promotion and advertising material. In addition, the concept of intercultural is used few times in the material. However, the meanings of the concepts are not explicitly explained. As with many other concepts related to culture and identity, multiculturalism is characterized in the material by the self-evidence of the concept. From the obviousness of the concept follows the undefined character of its content. However, undefined concepts have their tacit contents.

In the research material, the concept of multiculturalism is intertwined with the concept of identity. In the rhetoric of the research material, the concepts of culture and identity approach each other - identity is seen manifested in culture and culture seems to determine identities. Additionally, the identity of a place or region and the social identity of the inhabitants seem to merge. A city, its physical and historical features, citizenship of the city and activities of the inhabitants in the city are intertwined in a multifaceted unity where features of the city also define the identity of its inhabitants. In turn, social networks give meanings to places. As Edward Said (1985, p. 54) has noticed, social and cultural identities are framed and given a background through their anchoring to particular places, landscapes and environments.

1. Multicultural layers of history

In all of the cities, the most common strategy in the production of the discourse of cultural diversity is to stress location of the city as a historical meeting place of different ethnicities, nationalities and religious communities. Urban architecture is also stressed as an expression of the multicultural layers of the cities. Additionally, in all the application books multicultural characteristics of the cities are verbalized with the metaphor of the city as a gateway. Cities are described as locations, through which people have shifted and still transit from one cultural area to another.

The stress on cultural diversity and being an open-minded meeting place for people is usually argued by referring to the historical past of the city. In the Turku book it is stated that "Turku has for centuries been a European meeting point where the Finnish, Russian, Swedish, Scandinavian, Baltic and German cultures coexist" (Helander et al. 2006, p. 11). Similarly, the book of Pécs describes:

Pécs is a multicultural city. In the past it developed cultural layers of Latin, Turkish, German, Croatian and Hungarian origin. Today it is the most important centre of German, Croatian and Romany culture in Hungary. (Takáts 2005, p. 17.)

The Tallinn book depicts how by:

Walking the streets and lanes, it is evident that the buildings of Tallinn are as diverse and multicultural as its people. Over the centuries, artisans and architects from Germany, Russia, Sweden, Finland and Italy have worked with Estonians to create the city we see today. (Tarand 2006, p. 11.)

This kind of perspective of cultural variety and of being both an active present-day and historical meeting point for people with varying backgrounds is a strategy for producing the place as a significant European city. Rather than just being a peripheric, monocultural locality, the city is represented as having connections to other (often more well-known) European nationalities and cultural identities. Further, these views follow the ideals of EU cultural policy, percolated to the decision on European Capitals of Culture, by stressing ideas of cultural dialogue, interaction and, even in some sense, unification of European nations.

Stressing the historical layers of (positive) multicultural interaction in the past centuries obscures power mechanisms which control present day cultural diversity. The multicultural past is represented in books and promotion material as a creative, stimulating and unproblematic condition. Past as well as current conflicts and confrontation related to cultural diversity are turned into a peaceful dialogue, which fades away the hierarchies of dominance and suppression related to confrontations, conflicts or 'dialogue'. For example, the web page of Pécs 2010 states:

A short walk in the downtown area reveals a multitude of coexisting cultural and historical zones. The Turkish mosque standing on the main square today functions as a Catholic church. The peaceful coexistence of cultures is vividly symbolised by the Turkish crescent and the Catholic cross on the dome of the mosque. (Pécs 2010, European Capital of Culture.)

The wars of the different cultures, ethnicities and religious groups are blotted out, and the symbol of the change of power over the region, the main mosque, is seen in the context of the European Capital of Culture as a peaceful symbol of coexistence. The two Turkish mosques of Pécs are frequently represented in the imagery of the city as the European Capital of Culture. The mosques are used as evidence of the multicultural character of the city. However, the city does not have a Muslim population originating from the period of the Turkish occupation. Currently less than 200 hundred Muslims live in Pécs – a half of them foreigners. At the moment, one of the mosques serves also as a museum and the other has been turned into a catholic church. In this case, the discourse of cultural diversity is produced from the dominant perspective. Similarly, the conflicts of the past are hidden, when the synagogue of Pécs is represented as an architectural sign of religious pluralism of the city. The destiny of the Jews of the city is silenced in the material. The Jewish minority (approximately 4000 people before the World War II) were transported to Auschwitz in July 1944 and only couple of hundred survivors returned back to the city after the war.

When the cultural diversity is represented as historical layers of the architecture of the city, cultural diversity is being aestheticized as visual diversity. The same mechanism is used when cultural diversity is being celebrated in particular festivals, temporary bazaars or cultural events focused on presenting cultures of particular groups or communities. Cultural diversity turns into experiences of the audience in the folk dance festivals or in the tasting of minority cultures' cuisines.

Aestheticizing or stressing the experiential character of cultural diversity easily obscures the social confrontation and power mechanisms of the discourse.

It seems that by stressing the multicultural past, the three cities try to represent themselves in the application books and promotion material as somewhat more culturally diverse than they are in practice and on institutional level. Comparing the demographic statistics of the cities, it can be observed that in Tallinn the different national, ethnic or linguistic minority groups form nearly 50% of the population.¹ The numbers are much lower in Turku and Pécs. However, the multicultural character of the city is also eagerly stressed in them. This emphasis follows the EU's instructions for the European Capital of Culture candidates as well as more general tendencies in global discussions concerning the promotion of culture and place (Lähdesmäki 2008, p. 12; Lähdesmäki 2007, pp. 457-459). Nevertheless, the application of Tallinn got some critical remarks from The Selection Panel for the European Capital of Culture 2011 about the focus of cultural activities of the city in relation to its multicultural population. The panel saw some questions "on the manner in which the broad spectrum of Tallinn's multicultural population would be included in the ongoing activities, particularly the large minority of people that have ethnic Russian backgrounds" (Report on the Selection Meeting for the European Capital of Culture 2011, p. 11).

2. Global street culture and contemporary art

In all case cities, the application books and promotion material utilizes more or less the global imagery of popular culture, youth culture, street culture and contemporary art. Cultural variety is understood in the global frame, where globalised cultural phenomena form a common starting point for cultural dialogue and communication. Stressing globalised cultural phenomena is a strategy for producing the discourse of cultural diversity which does not seek the origins or authenticity of cultural products, but underlines the production of urbanness, urban culture and creativity in addition to experiences within the culturally mixed urban community of the city.

The concept of cultural diversity can be approached in terms of the larger discussion regarding globalization. The second wave of globalization research has focused its interests towards particularist projects and the emphasis of nationalist, regionalist and local phenomena in relation to global processes (Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2002, pp. 322-424). Globalism and cosmopolitanism are seen as being created by utilizing the myths, memories, values, symbols and traditions, which form the cultures and discourses of national and ethnic communities (Smith 1991, p. 159). Global cultural phenomena are constructed through globalizing the particular, ethnic, national, regional or local. Global locality, or glocalism as it is sometimes called, is manifested in the recycling and reuse of cultural products and discourses of particularist, regional and local communities.

In many views, globalisation is seen as a threat which leads to the homogenization of cultures: globalization flattens the particularity of cultures and locations by recycling certain cultural features. Homogenization of cultures is often described via the negative visions of an unwanted mixture of cultural features. Creolisation, transculturalisation and hybridisation – concepts which have been used to describe culture under global conditions – are often seen as threats to unified cultural communities and their identities.

However, the global condition of culture can also be seen as a positive state, which encourages cultural participation and enables creativity, which utilizes diversity of cultural influences. This kind

of emphasis in the discourse of cultural diversity stresses a ‘melting pot’ type of communality, which is seen as being formed by people coming from a variety of ethnic, national, cultural and sub-cultural backgrounds.

A communality of the inhabitants can also be fostered without referring to any particular ethnicity, nationality or cultural group. Local community and communality can be seen to be formed through people being and living together in addition to a joint consumption and production of the city’s cultural variety. It is written for example in the Tallinn application that the city aims to “root the lifestyle of participating actively in creating culture” (Tallinn – European Capital of Culture 2011, p. 3); the city wishes to be...

[...]a place where both rappers and rockers would feel at home; a city where cosy coffee-shops and noisy nightclubs could exist side by side; where both history fans and teenagers could find something to discover. (Tallinn – European Capital of Culture 2011, p. 2.)

Particularly, the global youth and street cultures can be seen in terms of participation and creation of imaginative and innovative art and cultural products. In the application books and promotion material of the three cities, global cultural phenomena are presented for example in the imageries of skateboarding, street dance, parcour, pop and rock concerts, street performances as well as spending time in street cafés and other urban areas. This kind of discourse has also characterized the former European Capitals of Culture programs (see e.g. Kylmänen 2001, p. 197).

The strategy of stressing communality, formed through being and living together, is somewhat ideological and political – it avoids emphasizing any particular group of people based on more or less static characteristics. This kind of understanding of ‘local community’ is very typical in the USA both in the rhetoric of cultural policy and in the everyday speech of citizens. In the USA, the concept of community has in general had very positive connotations and the fostering of it has, therefore, taken on political tones (e.g. Kwon 2002, p. 112). Similar views on community have also been strengthened in western discourses of contemporary culture and urban planning. During the last decade, these views have been stressed in the discourses and practices of community art, community theatre and community dance (Lähdesmäki 2007, p. 374).

In particular, the discussions of contemporary art have stressed the multicultural and global elements as its inevitable and natural focuses. The essence of the contemporary art scene has often been seen characterized by the diversity of art and cultural influences, position taking in mixed cultural flows, and creating responses to surrounding global or local cultural phenomena. Moreover, this kind of position is given to contemporary art in the application books and promotion material of the three cities.

3. International canon of high art

The western canon of art embodies the history of the so-called masterpieces made by the greatest artists of all time. These well-known and internationally famous and appreciated artists represent different nationalities as well as regional and cultural groups, though many of them have been profoundly cosmopolitan during their lifetime. The canon of art and the values it comprises has been established through decades and centuries of history writing. As background information and basic cultural knowledge, it forms a starting point for art and cultural discourses in the western world. Because the canon of art has an international dimension, it can be taken as a point of departure

for the production of the discourse of cultural diversity. This strategy is further used in the application books and promotion material of the forthcoming European Capitals of Culture. The international canon of art, and particularly its Eurocentric interpretation, is produced in the texts as a consequence of intense cultural and artistic exchange in addition to influences between European nations, styles, art schools and artists. As it is written in the press material of Pécs:

The careers of the so-called Bauhäuslers of Pécs testify to the multicultural and inter-ethnic image of the region and represent uniquely that the town and its surroundings at one time belonged – thanks to this group – to the forefront of modern art and architecture. (Pécs 2010, European Capital of Culture 2009, p. 12.)

Local artists are seen in the terms of canonised art and as part of the international exchange of artistic movements. Exhibiting the canonized artists relates the city to the international discourse of art, which is being placed above the particularist discussions. The application book of Pécs emphasis this discourse by writing as follows:

Examples of the city's links to the first region [the Central-European German cultural region] include the past directors of the choir and the orchestra of the bishopric, who generally come from Vienna, for instance Mozart's contemporary Georg Lickl, or the architects of the Bauhaus school, Marcel Breuer and several of his contemporaries, who left Pécs for Germany to attain world-wide fame. (Takáts 2005, p. 10.)

Relying on the western canon of art means that art and cultural phenomena are often seen in a profoundly official sense and in the frames of high culture. Emphasis on the canon underlines also the meaning and power position of several art and cultural institutions. The stress on canonized art and art institutions emphasizes the power structures in the discourse of cultural diversity: canon and institutions often represent the majority while minorities and minority cultures are seen as 'others'. Furthermore, the discourse of cultural diversity is often being produced from the power position of some majority group or culture. This kind of power structure produces a composition, whereby art and culture are easily seen as phenomena, which are created in the institutions and not produced by common people in their everyday life. In that sense, art and culture are seen as phenomena, which have to be brought to the regions (i.e. suburbs inhabited by immigrants and ethnic minorities) which have no art and culture of their own. As it is written in the Tallinn application: "People of culture and cultural institutions in Tallinn have to make it their mission to bring culture to the inhabitants of remote regions" (Tallinn – European Capital of Culture 2011, p. 4). The same idea is expressed in the book of Turku as follows:

Creating and experiencing culture is encouraged by taking art and culture to the people - from the centre of the city to the suburbs, from traditional cultural spaces to shops, public transport and streets, from museums to industrial warehouses. (Helander et al. 2006, p. 42.)

What is being 'brought' or 'taken' to the remote regions is the notion of high art in addition to culture and art which is valued in art institutions through the system of canonized art.

4. Representations of Others in the productions of imagery of cultural diversity

One essential strategy of cultural diversity is to represent different minorities and their visual culture as signs of cultural diversity of the cities in question. However, the representations of minorities may

underline the stereotypical imagery, in which the difference is turned into exoticism or tourist attraction. The mosques in Pécs, with their minarets, flat domes and Islamic ornaments form an illustration, which turns the imagery of a religious group into the discourse of cultural diversity. The images of folkdance groups with colorful ethnic clothes on the web page of Pécs2010 (titled as The Multicultural City) visualize the discourse of cultural diversity, which is being performed to the (majority) audience. The otherness in the discourse is being produced with the images which underline the distinguished ethnic originality of cultural traditions and distinct cultural features.

In addition, the imagery in the discourse of cultural diversity utilizes the distinguished ethnicity of people as a base of representing diversity. The discourse of cultural diversity is being produced by representing non-white actors in art and culture events. This kind of distinguished ethnicity of people is often related to suburbs. In general, the otherness of the representations of ethnic minorities and distinctive ethnic traditions is underlined by their fewness in the promotion material. An essential function of these representations seems to be to illustrate the cultural diversity per se. Giorgia Aiello and Crispin Thurlow (2006, p. 156) have made a similar kind of notion when researching the web sites of the former European Capitals of Culture. They note that “with ethnic and other minorities noticeable by their absence, it is in this way that images also shore up the ‘imaginative geography’ of insiders and outsiders of the city as a European Capital of Culture”. The promotion material of the European Capitals of Culture creates the imaginative geography of Europe and image of the ‘true’ and ‘justified’ citizens of the city, region, nation and Europe.

In the application books, ethnicity, immigrants and suburbs form an entity, which is being presented in positive multicultural terms. In the application book of Turku, a project titled Suburbia is described as follows:

The entire city and its visitors are invited to the appointed suburbs for a variety of events such as a cultural [in the Finnish text written as multicultural] bazaar, a garden party, a parade of old cars, a street painting event, a bus tour, a skate boarding event or a big environmental art project. The projects are designed together with the residents of each suburb and reflect both the nature and atmosphere of the area and its residents. The projects are carried out by the residents of each suburb and the local area committees together with community and urban artists. (--) Suburbia highlights the cultures of suburbs, brings the suburbs and the centre of the city closer to each other and emphasizes the diversity of the city. (Helander et al, 2006, p. 70.)

In this strategy, the diversity is localised to suburbs and its (immigrant) population. However, the cultural and art projects in the suburbs seem to need an outsider, like community or urban (majority) artist, to direct the community in their artistic activities.

In addition, the suburbs can be left in their own ‘ethnic’ state, and the otherness of them can be turned into exoticism. For example, in the application of Tallinn, the Russian inhabited suburbs are discovered as tourist destinations. Viewed from the bus window, the otherness of poor and ragged suburbs transforms into an urban safari. As it says in the application of Tallinn:

Both the tourists and the citizens have to get a temptation to jump on a trolleybus or a tram and go to the peculiar, strange and alternative districts full of culture, where concrete walls are covered with sharp graffiti, cool garage-bands play, revolutionary happenings and performances are performed. (Tallinn – European Capital of Culture 2011, p. 2.)

Image of the culture in suburbs merge with the ideas of creativity of street and youth culture and innovative contemporary art. In these views, vivid culture and artistic creativity exist outside the city center and the official and institutional sphere of art as well.

The question of power

This article has indicated how the discourse of cultural diversity is produced with several different strategies in the promotion material of Pécs, Tallinn and Turku. All of the cities have stressed their location as a historical meeting place of different ethnicities and nationalities. Additionally, the cities emphasized their architecture as an expression of multicultural layers of the cities. In the cities, cultural diversity was related to the global imagery of popular culture, street culture and contemporary art. In addition, the cities stressed the canon of Western art history as a base for common Europeanness compounded of various nationalities and regionalities. One essential strategy was to represent different minorities and their visual culture as signs of cultural diversity.

Cultural diversity, as well as multiculturalism, is profoundly political concepts and their definitions and representations involve inevitably the power structures and production of cultural and political hierarchies. In the discourse of cultural diversity some groups or cultures seem to be more important than others: only some cultures and groups are promoted in the discourse. Moreover, the discourse itself is often produced from the power position of some majority group or culture. In the application books and promotion material, the discourse of cultural diversity is often outlined narrowly, mainly in reference to nationality, ethnicity or religion, not emphasizing, for example, as much social class, sub-cultures or sexual identity. However, the participation of children and the young are stressed in the material of all three cities.

Can the discourse of cultural diversity ever be produced without the problematics of dominance and oppression? Do the social and cultural tensions always exist between the minorities and the majority? Nira Yuval-Davis (1997, p. 198) argues, that in multiculturalist policies the naturalization of the Western hegemonic culture will continue, while minority cultures become reified and differentiated from what is regarded by the majority as normative. In addition, the discourse of cultural diversity tends to ignore the questions of power relations inside the minorities. The members of minorities are easily constructed as basically homogeneous, speaking with a unified cultural or racial voice. From the point of view of the hegemonic culture, these voices are constructed in a way that makes them as distinct as possible (within the boundaries of multiculturalism) from the majority culture, as an aim to make them 'different'. Yuval-Davis (1997, p. 200) remarks, that such constructions do not allow space for internal power conflicts and interest differences within the minority collectivity. These conflicts or interests may focus, for example on class, gender or politics. Collectivity boundaries are often presented as fixed, static, ahistorical and essentialists, with no space for growth and change. All members of the cultural collectivity are easily seen as equally committed to its culture (Yuval-Davis 1997, p. 200). These remarks can be used in the critical reading of the promotion material of the European Capitals of Culture. Despite their stress on positive effects of cultural diversity and objectives of fostering general well-being through celebrating various ethnic, national and regional cultures, the question of (unequal) power relations characterises the discourse.

It seems that power hierarchies and political tension are bound to the concept of cultural diversity even though it is often introduced as equal and anti-racist discourse. A central feature of the discourse of cultural diversity is that it tends to obscure its power mechanisms. Supporting and celebrating

cultural diversity and cultural heterogeneity of the community may aim to eliminate inequality, however, dominance and subordination may be founded on the structures of the discourse itself.

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- 1 Some examples of the demographic statistics of the population of cities in question: Population of Pécs by nationalities: Magyars 94%, Germans 3,1%, Roma 1,2%, Croats 1%, others 0,7% (Population Census 2001, 2001). Population of Tallinn by nationality: Estonians 52,2%, Russians 38,6% Ukrainians 3,8% Belorussians 2,1% Finns 0,6%, others 2,7% (Statistical yearbook of Tallinn 2008, 2009). Population of Turku by mother tongue (2008): Finnish speakers 88,1%, Swedish speakers 5,2%, others 6,7% (Statistics Finland, 2008). The data collection methods for demographic statistics vary in different cities (and nations), and therefore the statistics are not comparable as such. In addition, the percentage of some minorities may be higher than the statistics indicate (for example in the case of the Roma minority in Pécs) because of the distortion caused by the method used.