

Genius loci: between handicrafts and local development

DOI: 10.30819/cmse.2-2.03

ABSTRACT

From a cultural perspective, handicrafts are among the resources that can be mobilised locally and play a key role in defining a place. In fact, they may help to delimit, structure, and identify a place within a network and/or a social and cultural system. Handicrafts can therefore play a significant contribution in strongly characterising places and their *genius loci* with regard to other places. This paper aims to define the role of handicrafts in the process of place construction, and how they can contribute as a resource in the creative milieu to support local development. In our approach, handicrafts as cultural capital are considered as a product (output) and as a resource (input). Without neglecting the former, through which the craft of a place is directly exploited, we will focus on handicrafts as part of the production process along two different lines. Handicrafts as an asset - participating in the production process of goods - are used to achieve a specific goal and have a precise cultural, social, and economic value. Therefore, it is important to understand how this resource - the specific know-how of a place - becomes an asset. Secondly, handicrafts affect and influence other resources.

KEY WORDS

Genius loci, handicrafts, local development, cultural heritage, creative milieu

Paper received: 26 October 2018 • Paper revised: 18 November 2018 • Paper accepted: 14 December 2018

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Ministry of Science
and Higher Education

Republic of Poland

The project is financed under the agreement 892_/P-DUN/2018 by the funds of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education allocated to the activities dissemi-