

Summer School

Going public: Social Sciences and Humanities in the 21st century in Europe

Stream 4. Material Culture and Identity

Small Case Study Presentation (15 min.) by Professor Sarah Holst Kjaer; Break-out room discussion (15 min.); Final presentation by students and common discussion (15 min.)

Second General Meeting
13.5.2022, 14-17 (Berlin time) via Zoom



Stream 4. Material Culture and Identity

Led by: Gabriele Alex (Tübingen) & Sarah Holst Kjaer (Stockholm)

- Links between material culture and identity.
- How do people relate to the world around them: materiality, monuments and lived-in environments.
- Constructions of identity, belonging, marginalization or exclusion.
- (Policy-supported) research-relationship between academics and grassroots/stakeholders.
- Method: Ethnographic participant observation and action research



Stream 4, learning objectives, in selection

- Explore and understand the ways and strategies through which **local, regional, national and transnational identities are forged in the public sphere by means of joint academic and grassroots**, i.e. community- and stakeholder-derived, exchanges in **contemporary Europe**
- Expand and deepen the students' knowledge regarding issues and challenges in the fields of **material culture, local culture**, narratives/oral tradition, **folklore and migration**, as they have developed in the social sciences and the humanities with an emphasis on contemporary Europe
- Appreciate the value of the comparative perspective when applied to the study of **material culture, local culture**, narratives/oral tradition, folklore and migration in contemporary Europe
- (Receive training in ethnographic **methods**)
- **Exchange knowledge** across disciplines and universities

Please view all learning objectives here:

<https://civis.eu/en/civis-courses/going-public-social-sciences-and-humanities-in-the-21st-century-europe>



Over all aim of the Civis-course: Culture heritage as resource for a community?

- What brings folklore and cultural heritage back into the academic and civic discourse as a **field of action**?
- Past and recent material classed as 'folklore' can be very similar to the ethnographic objects in museums and collections: in what way can this material fill the role as **meaningful cultural resources** for different groups of actors?
- How can folklore and cultural heritage act as nodes for new emerging networks by bringing together academics and civil actors?

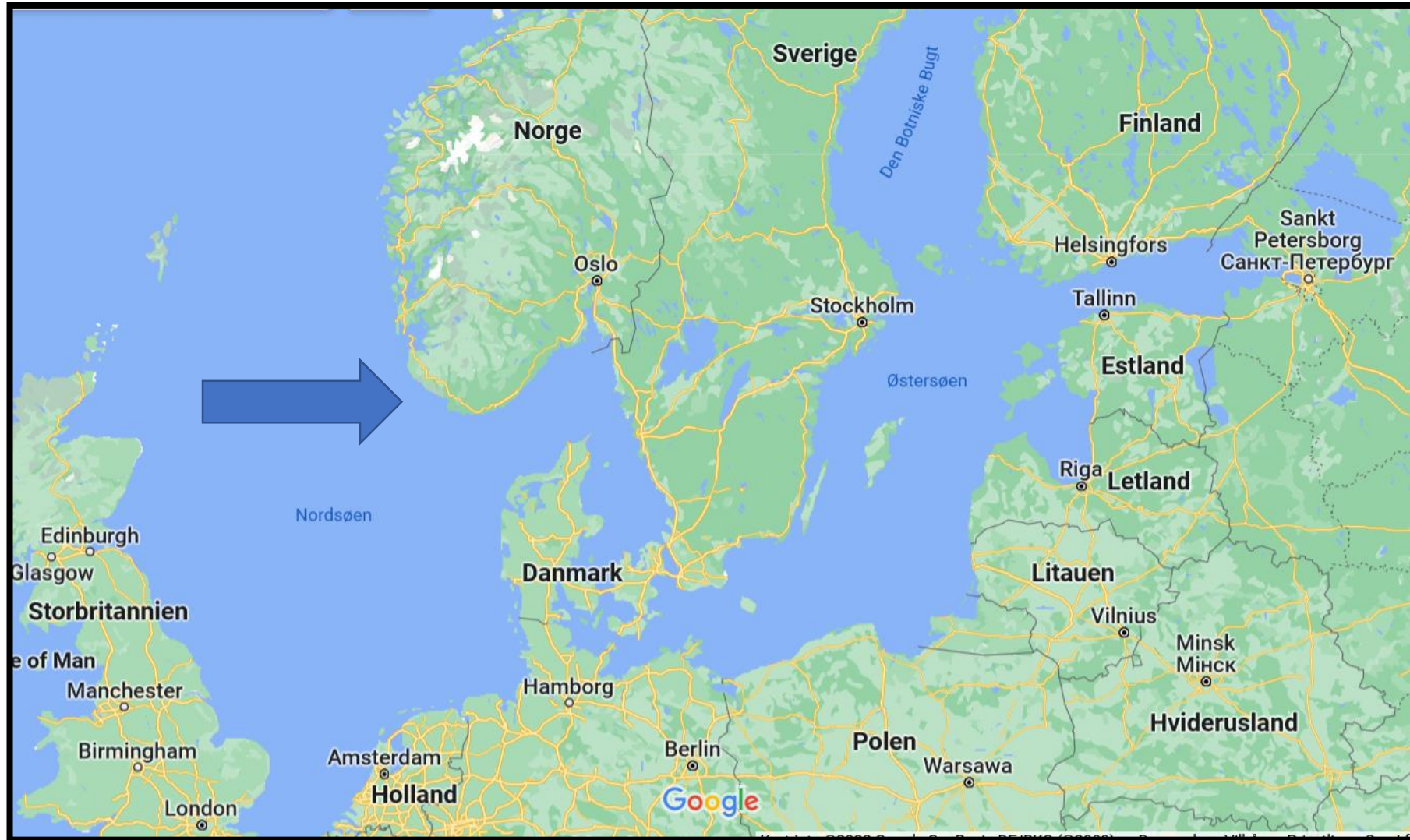


Case study presentation: "The American Lista, Norway"



Karin Ögren: 'The Eye that Sees' (1992)

"The American Lista" (Norwegian-American Community, Peninsula, in the south), Norway



Research Question:

- How can cultural heritage be turned into cultural heritage tourism (in order for the local community sustain)?


Definitioner från [Oxford Languages](#) · [Läs mer](#)

 **folklore**

/ˈfɒklɔː/

noun

the traditional beliefs, customs, and stories of a community, passed through the generations by word of mouth.

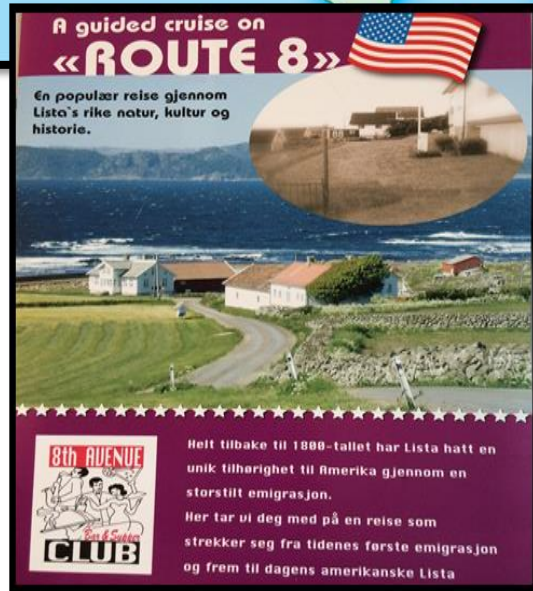
Liknande: [mythology](#) [lore](#) [oral history](#) [tradition](#) [folk tradition](#) [legends](#) 

- a body of popular myths or beliefs relating to a particular place, activity, or group of people.
"Hollywood folklore"



Celebrating the cultural heritage of Norwegian work-migration to America, 1910-1980

'Semi-professional' heritage tourism products, e.g. 'Route 8 Tour' along American Style Houses and an annual event: The American Festival (12.000 visitors)



Market-based cultural heritage?

- **Widespread research trend:** “Culture-led development” a policy based intention of ‘rural revitalisation’ through the use of culture in order to sustain local societies and retain its citizens through culture-led activities (tourism, experience, event).
- **Goal:** A rural place’ overall attractiveness in a consumer-perspective.



When 'Going Public' is supported by politics and funding...

In Cultural Policy, both in Scandinavia and in the European Union, research in local communities' cultural heritage expressions is often **only funded** if research can be turned into business strategies and business models, making a profit in order to sustain local communities:

In practice, this means researchers are expected to **professionalise** and **curate** local residents' cultural expressions in order to deliver tools for consumer-friendly and market-oriented (culture heritage) tourism products.



The American Festival, created by the local community through popular culture signifiers (2016)



Photo: Thomas Høyrup Christensen, 2016

Fragment of The American Parade: 'Kjell-Elvis' (a local Elvis Presley impersonator) with his Hoola-girls (Thai women from the local Thai-restaurant)...



Rural reality: Everybody does everything. Local performers, cultural entrepreneurs, stakeholders are also trained nurses, shopkeepers, pre-school teachers, etc...



Culture heritage as resource for sustaining local communities?

Market-perspective seldom critiqued:

- Is 'cultural-led development' at all possible in a regional reality which lacks professionalised entrepreneurs?
- Is culture heritage and folklore more an identity-project than a commodity for others to consume?
- Is it at all possible to earn enough money to support a community in the low season?



'Brooklyn Square', Valse, Norway





Literature

Kjær, Sarah Holst 2019: Village Vintage in Southern Norway. Revitalisation and Vernacular Entrepreneurship in Culture Heritage Tourism. In: Martínez, Francisco & Laviolette, Patrick (eds.), *Repair, Brokenness, Breakthrough. Ethnographic Responses*. London & New York: Berghahn Books, 179-196.

Lysgård, Hans Kjetil 2016: The 'actually existing' cultural policy and culture-led strategies of rural places and small towns, *Journal of Rural Studies*, 44:1-11.



Student's Group Discussion. Stream 4

Today's break-out room discussion (15 minutes):

Make sure everybody voice their knowledge.

Discuss **your** experience with **local community-building**:

- Name places, projects, their cultural signifiers in the landscape and their goals.
- How are projects supported through political instruments of regional, urban or tourism/culture-led development?

