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## Heritagisation and Community Formation in the Pivško Region

### Abstract

Pivško is a small region in south-western Slovenia that appropriated a nationally recognised literary hero named Martin Krpan as its most visible heritage. The article questions if this act of appropriation correlates with what the inhabitants of the Pivško region consider as examples of their personal, family, local or regional heritage. These various heritages are observed through the prisms of (political) power relations and community-building processes, while the main question addressed in the article is, the symptom of what any of those heritages are. The power and uses of heritages are therefore considered as well as their capacity to overcome already existing macro-social definitions, hierarchies and positions. The research sample of mostly middle-aged or older generations, local activists or representatives of various associations or political bodies revealed that the heritage of the Pivško region is diverse, related to the natural environment and personal life histories, while Martin Krpan was rarely considered a part of it. Despite its variety of interpretations, the common denominator for heritage is its capacity to serve as a mechanism of social cohesion and community formation. However, while mostly viewed as a remedy against individualisation and alienation, heritage at the same time reproduces existing socio-political power relations and, especially when compared to the creative industries, is only rarely considered an additional or exclusive existential opportunity.

Keywords: heritage, community formation, power relations, social cohesion, Slovenia

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Pivško is a small region in south-western Slovenia that promotes and represents its identity in the form of a man named Martin Krpan, a nationally recognised literary character. As the story by Fran Levstik goes, he was a smuggler of salt who outsmarted even the Austrian emperor and won a fight against one of world's best warriors. He is a cherished hero noted for being inventive, smart and a voice of reason and, according to one of the interpretations, he was from the Pivško region. A couple of years ago, the municipality of Pivka chose Martin Krpan as its primary symbol and started to promote his embeddedness in the Pivško region by also designing a coat of arms and flag based on his character.<sup>1</sup>

Martin Krpan therefore became established as the most important regional symbol, the most 'characteristic' representative of the region, but only from a politically powerful and authoritative standpoint, while in the meantime some heritage institutions appeared in the area with the desire to be heard and (with respect to tourism) recognised as well. One of them is the Eco-Museum of the Seasonal Lakes of Pivka,<sup>2</sup> which, as is already stressed in its name, is mostly dedicated to promoting the nature of the region and how people have adapted to it. Among its other activities, the museum began to question the prevailing narrative about Martin Krpan as the most important symbol or even representative of the heritage of the area and wanted to explore the attitude of the Pivško residents towards this symbol. To find out what the inhabitants of the region consider the most salient examples of their or the local area's heritage, they invited a group of students from the University of Ljubljana's Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology to contact and talk to

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1 An image of a 'legendary Slovenian hero' Martin Krpan, who 'supposedly rambled through the area' and lived in a village called Vrh at Sv. Trojica [Peak at The Holy Trinity], supposedly located near Sv. Trojica in the municipality of Pivka, appears on the municipality's coat-of-arms and flag since 1998 (Web source 3) as well as on the coat-of-arms of the Pivka Primary School (Web source 4). There is also a well-known Association of Vintage Vehicles from Pivka called Martin Krpan, the Pivka Tourist Association organises the Krpan Hike and there is a Krpan Bar in Pivka. However, the question is which of the villages named after the Holy Trinity (Sv. Trojica) – the one on the Bloke plateau or the one near Pivka – is actually mentioned in the story of Martin Krpan. This namely causes disagreement between both municipalities (Web source 5; cf. Trobič 2005; for the comparable insights into a less top-down mediated appropriation of another (Slovenian-Croatian) regional hero, Peter Klepec, see Moric and Perinić Lewis 2019).

2 The museum is located at the entrance to the lakes. It was opened eight years ago with the help of European funds to promote local development (Web source 1). It is supposed to didactically inform visitors about the Pivško lakes and the landscape park that was established a year later as part of the European Culturecovery project. Its main purpose is to 'protect and restore the intangible cultural heritage of Central Europe' (Web Source 2).

the local population<sup>3</sup> about what they consider the best examples of their or the local area's heritage, what in their opinion distinguishes Pivško from the rest of Slovenia and what role they attribute to Martin Krpan.

In this article, the material gathered on local perceptions of heritage and heritagisation in the Pivško area is analysed and interpreted. It addresses several important questions: What do the interlocutors imagine as personal, family and local heritage? What perceptions do they have in common? What are their attitudes regarding the regional heritage promoted by the municipality of Pivka?<sup>4</sup> The article later addresses the additional questions of to whom, when, and why did we speak of heritage and how heritagisation is related to the processes of community formation. Heritage is namely always embedded in various power-related spheres of social life, such as gender, class and politics (see, e.g. Edson 2004), however this article mainly studies it through the prism of local or regional political power relations. Authoritarian heritage discourses, for instance those about Martin Krpan, are related to other heritage discourses which brings multivocality, possible impacts and empowerment through the heritage to the forefront of the article. Each is discussed in this article within the context of community formation, especially with respect to feelings of belonging and connection.

As a modern phenomenon, heritage can be observed predominantly through its relation to community – it can even be perceived as a phenomenon or a symptom of community (*cf.* Fakin Bajec 2011; Hafstein 2018b). According to Hafstein, heritagisation is the most modern aspect of folklorisation, or the final phase in the long-term process of how ethnological perspectives, knowledge and concepts become established among the public. Hafstein claims that the emphasis on cultural comparisons, specifics and heritage has today become universal; to have a heritage means to be modern, to be able to reflect on and take a critical distance from oneself, from one's own past. It is a modern way of confronting and trying to manage various risks and uncertainties (Hafstein 2018a, 128; *cf.* Edson 2004; Smith 2006), while simultaneously an ethnologist or cultural anthropologist should observe what various communities perceive as risky and what uncertainties and fears they face. He or she

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3 The research was conducted in the 2018–2019 academic year as part of a seminar entitled Ethnological Regional Research of Slovenia, which is compulsory for all students enrolled in the Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology master's programme. An employee of the eco-museum provided students with a list of potential interlocutors; each student had to contact two of them and contribute summaries or transcriptions of the conversations as well as their observations and impressions of and reflections on the research situation.

4 Students were also supposed to relate all this information to at least some basic information about the interlocutor's life stories and their activities and values.

should analyse the symptom of what various heritages of various communities are (*cf.* Hafstein 2018b, 154; Hafstein 2018a, 139–140).

In this article, I am therefore concerned with the question of just who determines the heritage of a chosen area, why it supposedly connects the inhabitants of an area and what inhabitants it in fact connects or is even capable of connecting. Is heritage established by authoritarian discourse, by professional discourses and notions? Is such a professional heritage regime embedded in a global system of a common difference (Wilk 1995), and is it (in) consistent with what residents of an area perceive as their (personal, family, local) heritage? (For example, compare what Weber [2007] and Fakin Bajec [2011] have to say on the topic.)<sup>5</sup> I examine the extent to which perceptions of (local) heritage are uniform or diverse and who can talk about them, while I also try to understand why they are important and real for those who speak about them. At the same time, I discuss the symptoms of what these perceptions of heritage are – how they reflect an individual’s or a group’s desires, aspirations and fears.

## **Community and Heritage**

Contemporary public policies directed at reconstruction, inclusion and sustainability on the one hand perceive communities as backward and underdeveloped, as stuck in the past, while on the other hand they consider them to be (supposedly) homogeneous, stable and therefore secure entities that people at least occasionally miss (Waterton and Smith 2010, 6–7; *cf.* Fakin Bajec 2011, 50). They are thought to offer safety and comfort and serve as a kind of remedy for potentially dangerous differences and social problems or deviations, such as crime, poverty, drug addiction and exclusion. Recent neoliberal governance of public life therefore no longer focuses so much on individuals as it does on communities, understood as cultural and administrative units responsible for and a solution to the state of ‘excessive individualism and state’s involvement in individual’s life’ (*cf.* Hafstein and Skrydstrup 2017, 45; Hafstein 2018b, 108). Neoliberal governance does not suppress communal activities; on the contrary, by making use of various professional, civic and political activities, it tries to identify and manage them. Being directly interested in professional, civic and political practices as well as the practices of commu-

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5 An example of such a discrepancy between authoritarian (professional) and more local perceptions of heritage is, for example, mentioned by van de Port and Meyer: professionals insisted that material remains ought to be the necessary condition for recognising one Dutch mill as an example of national heritage, while the locals insisted it is enough that they perceive the mill as their village’s trademark. Since the locals persisted, professionals, arguing that mills had (materially) changed in the past as well, declared a copy of such a mill as an example of national heritage (2018, 11–12).

nities and various heritagisation processes, such forms of governance strive to guide individuals in self-transformation and also more and more towards self-regulation (Hafstein 2018b, 104).

It is therefore especially important to know just who participates in heritagisation and who on the other hand is excluded from it. It is equally important to relate this information to the community: while some in a community participate in defining what they consider to be their heritage, others are not affected by such processes and might therefore remain unrecognised and invisible (Smith 2006, 29–34; Waterton and Smith 2010, 10; *cf.* Hafstein 2018a, 140). Cultural heritage, which supposedly produces a strong sense of belonging (Jezernik 2010; *cf.* Edson 2004), is a strategy for dealing with (cultural, external) differences, while at the same time the process of heritagisation might hide some internal (social) differences or power plays within the community. So heritagisation objectifies not only (cultural) practices and expressions of community but community as well: it is only during a process of heritagisation that communities emerge as clearly defined entities, since it is the process itself that defines and determines what a community is, who belongs to it or who is excluded from it (Hafstein 2018b, 117, 120–121, 125; *cf.* Fakin Bajec 2011, 291; Beardslee 2016, 89). By intervening in habitus, practices and expressions are transformed into objects (of, e.g. study, protection or presentation). By investing interest in these objects, (parts of) communities are also defined and bound together. Heritagisation thus often serves only to establish communities and empower them to present their vision of history and identity.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, the process of heritagisation itself forces communities to use common and already established (professional) terms, which in fact function as power mechanisms. This is how the political heritage of subordinating communities is maintained – heritagisation also disciplines and submits communities to (authoritarian) rules and behavioural patterns (Hafstein 2018b, 110, 116, 118).<sup>7</sup>

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6 How communities present shared visions of history and identity to insiders as well as to outsiders is often linked to the commodification of heritage and its incorporation into tourism (see, e.g. Dallen 2011).

7 From a historical standpoint, the fact that communities and heritage change and that at the same time they are not homogeneous, that they are constructed and selective (*cf.* Fakin Bajec 2011, 2020; Poljak Istenič 2014; Smith 2006; Waterton and Smith 2010), is nothing new. As van de Port and Meyer (2018, 2–3) stress, communities (and heritages) are reinvented all the time: ‘So what if we reinvented ourselves once again?’ More than anything else, it is important to ask why such changes occur: despite knowing that heritage and communities are constructed and selective, one can still be convinced otherwise. Why – despite such knowledge – can someone therefore still experience heritage and communities as real and important?

### **About the Case Study: Whose Heritage?**

In the Pivško area, thirty-four mostly semi-structured, variously personal and mostly individual interviews were conducted with local interlocutors. Twenty-two (65 per cent) of the interlocutors were women, almost a third, 29 per cent, were older than 60 years of age, the majority (47 per cent) were between 40 and 60 years of age, while 15 per cent of the interlocutors were between 25 and 40 years of age. During the survey, 66.7 per cent of the interviewees lived in the vicinity of Pivka, while the remaining 12 were from the town of Pivka; six interlocutors (16.7 per cent) had migrated to Pivško from other (nearby or more distant) parts of Slovenia. The majority of interlocutors, 52.8 per cent, were employed (in various fields), while 44.4 per cent were retired. Additionally, 80.5 per cent of the interlocutors were also active in the local community to various degrees, while most of the remaining interlocutors were contacted by students (for example, with the help of their acquaintances) without a referral by the museum.

Most of the interviews, observations and reflections mainly bear witness to the attitudes, perceptions and values of people from the Pivško region, those already involved in (local) heritagisation, cultural or political activities,<sup>8</sup> which in the first place is also why they were put on the students' contact list. The interviews are therefore mostly about 'the locally authorised heritage discourse' of the individuals,<sup>9</sup> representing their own views or the views of, for instance, various organisations, institutions or associations: "They also haven't been personal, nor was the concept of heritage discussed a lot" (S. Z.).<sup>10</sup> A minority of the interlocutors often expressed their fears that they did not know enough about the topic to contribute much to the conversation. They considered themselves to be 'laypersons', 'they thought they needed to answer properly, to give the "correct" answers and haven't felt capable of doing that, [while] at the same time they supported the idea of asking people what's im-

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8 The interlocutors were, for example, members or presidents of specific (e.g. cultural, historical, tourist or retirement) associations, politically active individuals (e.g. councillors of municipalities), presidents of local or village communities, employees of the municipality or individual heritage institutions, collectors, teachers and amateur researchers of (local) history.

9 As noted in one reflective comment: individuals were 'able to prepare for the interview in advance and present what they considered to be heritage' (S. Z.). However, it became evident when preparing for the fieldwork that it was not easy even for the students to talk to each other about their notions of personal, family and local heritage – not because the questions were overly personal, but because their perceptions of heritage were quite diverse.

10 The students' names are abbreviated in the article, while the material has been discussed only after securing their approval and it is kept at the Archive of the Department for Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

portant to them' (T. S.). The material therefore does not present the perceptions of randomly selected people who only share the characteristic of being residents of the Pivka region.

### **Heritage for Whom? For Ourselves!**

The sample of interlocutors<sup>11</sup> defined personal heritage as follows:

- 1) Objects related to important individuals (e.g. parents and relatives), as well as objects related to the activities of relatives (e.g. family inheritance);
- 2) Memories, photographs;
- 3) (Aspects of) celebrations performed for a longer time (e.g. Christmas blessing of the house), habits (visiting the lake, hiking, outdoor activities);
- 4) Inherited knowledge (an individual's recipes, stories, knowledge related to mushroom picking) or values (e.g. a sense of 'togetherness' or community building, a sense of cooperation; the importance of nature and its preservation);
- 5) Objects related to people's hobbies, leisure activities and creativity (piano, library, handicrafts);
- 6) Dialect and mentality.

The notion of personal heritage was most often intertwined with the notion of family heritage, of 'what you create' (e.g. the property or knowledge that one acquires) (Interview T. S., F, 40–60, surr. P., inactive).<sup>12</sup> For the majority, family heritage included their parents' or a relative's house or apartment, the family itself and sometimes also neighbours. Additionally, individuals also mentioned old personal items, such as tools; a photobook; family stories; habits (e.g. sledding and skiing on a nearby hill); moral values and attitudes towards work; 'biological heritage' (e.g. family diseases); ethnographic collections; a tomb with a tombstone in the shape of a (Pivško) cross.

Ideas about local or regional heritage were even more diverse: the interlocutors expressed as many different notions of local heritage as there were

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11 In quantitatively analysing the contents of the conversations, I considered only direct answers by the interlocutors but also included all the mentioned examples for each category.

12 Since many interlocutors have not agreed to reveal their personal data, I decided to anonymise all of them as well. Their paraphrased or quoted statements are marked with only descriptive information about them (gender, age, place of residence – the surroundings of Pivka or Pivka town – and their (in-)activity), while the student's initials mark who conducted an interview, wrote its summary or offered a reflection. Therefore, a reference like Interview T. S., F, 25–40 years, P., inactive stands for an interview conducted by a student with the initials T. S., who had a conversation with an inactive female between 25 and 40 years of age and residing in Pivka.

interlocutors (see Fakin Bajec 2011, 50, 54, 56). Nevertheless, most typically local or regional heritage was recognised in specific buildings (old houses, churches, crosses) and in nature or nature-related activities (e.g. the forest or an individual tree, hills, water, ponds, lakes, cold weather, the Bora wind; hunting, gathering; food, such as prosciutto and cheese; a dependence on geographical location and its transience and peacefulness). Less often interlocutors also mentioned the Park of the Military History in Pivka, Martin Krpan or various socialising occasions (e.g. Corpus Christi or a tradition celebrated on the 28<sup>th</sup> of December), customs and habits, crafts, the industrial past (the railway or (once) prominent companies) or the Second World War. Local heritage was thus equated with ‘what is worthy of attention’ in the area or in just a part of it, meaning the interlocutors commonly equated heritage with local sights, with ‘specific features of the area’. Besides being something appreciated by the local population, the interlocutors also considered heritage as having a potential for representing the area. However, they not only often combined notions of personal and family heritage but also tied local heritage strongly to both. This is because an individual’s activities are intertwined with their social activities and being socially active is first and foremost always one’s own personal choice.<sup>13</sup>

Due to the nature of the material, which primarily bears witness to the perceptions of people who are already interested in heritage, it should therefore be emphasised even more that heritage is only one of the reasons that people may choose to reside in the Pivško region: ‘There are not many opportunities for highly qualified people [to have a job in the region – M. H.], but nevertheless, one should not neglect its history and culture, which are exceptional’ (Interview S. Z., F, 40–60, surr. P., act.). From the economic standpoint, the environment is therefore not considered the most attractive or exceptional quality of the region, but according to the above interlocutor its history and culture are sufficient reasons to keep living in the area (see Watterton and Smith 2010). They – and not the economy or, for example, sports in the region – are perceived as solutions for preserving the liveliness, activity and connectedness of the community, which is why younger generations

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13 For example, one interlocutor who works as an architect emphasised architecture as a locally important example of heritage (Interview An. V., F, 40–60, surr. P., act.), while an interlocutor interested in Pivško crosses mentioned one such cross as an important example of family heritage (Interview K. F., M, > 60, P., act.). Therefore, an individual’s perceptions of heritage always depend on his or her life story, which became most obvious when the interlocutors spoke about their material, social and emotional connections to the area and its inhabitants – how they live in and with the territory, how they connect and position themselves within it, where and to whom they belong to, and how, and where and when they consider their behaviour to be meaningful.

should also familiarise themselves with history and culture (see Fakin Bajec 2015–2016, 187, 190): ‘They strive to transmit the heritage of the area to the younger generation while not necessarily also to people from outside Pivško’ (SZ). Although nowadays ‘children supposedly also receive more knowledge about heritage in schools’ (Interview T. S., F, 40–60, *surr. P., inact.*), the collected material does reveal that the number of people who think about heritage increases with age: ‘When asked about when the heritage of the area became important to her, she answered that this had changed over time, that only after secondary school did she begin to value the region’s nature’ (Interview T. S., F, 25–40 years, P., *inactive*). Similarly, another interlocutor reportedly felt the importance of heritage when she moved away from home (Interview T. S., F, 40–60, *surr. P., inactive*). Another had the following to say: ‘Now I am dealing with cultural heritage ... now when I’m old!’ (Interview T. T., M, > 60, *surr. P., act.*). Heritage-related activities can, on the other hand, also be part of a strategic, conscious assimilation of newcomers (see Habinc 2009), who sometimes become even more active than locals: ‘Well, in fact, Krpan and A. [the name of an interlocutor who has been impersonating Martin Krpan for decades at local events – M. H.], we are the same person. This is how much I identify with him’ (Interview M. K., M, > 60, *surr. P., act.*).<sup>14</sup>

### **Heritage as a Symptom: Being Connected, Embedded and Active**

In trying to answer the question posed in the introduction – the symptom of what (personal, family, local) heritage is – I conclude that more than anything else, the interlocutors are afraid of disconnection, non-affiliation and individualism (*cf.* Fairclough 2009; Fakin Bajec 2011, 288–289). They perceive heritage as something that has the power to connect. It can connect people through time and/or place, in time and/or in place: it can connect generations (relatives), it can connect individuals to the natural or social environment. It indicates how the past influences the present, what effect environments have on people’s lives, while it also embeds individuals in time, in place and in the local community. Recognising something as heritage was therefore often conditioned by a feeling of connection, with having a sense of being influenced by or embedded in time, place and community. Whether on a personal, family level or on a local level, the interlocutors often felt that heritage is something that their ancestors left them, something that once was a part of their ancestors’ life that still exists today.

The difference between transmission and connection therefore seems crucial: a sense of connection is positively transmitted or transferred through

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<sup>14</sup> Compare these sentiments to those of another interlocutor: ‘Heritage allowed him to become integrated with an environment that he did not know before’ (T. T.).

ideas or objects.<sup>15</sup> The value of heritage (e.g. woodworking or employment in the wood-processing industry) must first be recognised (Interview An. V., F, 40–60, surr. P., act.); and it is a value which enables a personal connection. It can further trigger engagement and various (public) activities that are also perceived as positive and selfless, oriented towards others, which again is a special value in itself. It connects contemporaneity with ideas about the past (communities), while what connects the past with the present is not so much about, for example, the similarity between (past and present) activities or their similar material appearance. It is, in the words of one interlocutor: ‘not only important to light bonfires because that’s also something our ancestors have done. Bonfires are also related to feelings and emotions, to socialisation; they establish continuity and push us towards others, towards cooperation’ (S. Z.). Being connected and embedded, feeling a sense of belonging with other people and the environment, is even more important and valuable element of heritage:

Even if we feel a bit funny and laugh at ourselves during the [Christmas – M. H.] blessing, I can see that the family likes this tradition [...] When you’re young, you need time to feel the value of what has been transferred to you and what is worth a lot. (Interview P. G., F, 40–60, surr. P., act.)

However, such positive evaluations of a ‘sense for the other’ might only be generational or related to the limitations of the research sample. Additionally, heritagisation might only be one of the ways in which people seek to decrease a perceived loss of connection. Decades ago, for example, a couple of interlocutors reportedly enjoyed village dances and gatherings, while today, even though they miss them, they organise other local social events:

We started to make a bonfire on John the Baptist Day in 2008, which is a substitute for those dances. We organised the first mass at 10 a.m.; it was followed by a concert, a feast and the lighting of the bonfire. (Interview S. Z., F, 40–60 years, surr. P., act.)

The majority of contemporary events that the interlocutors talked about are carefully cultivated and framed rather than spontaneous occasions for socialising. The events mostly involve entertainment and are rarely planned without a set programme or scenario, which requires networking, engagement and effort.

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15 For example: ‘One’s attitude towards heritage, he says, must be positive. It is important to remember childhood, values and knowledge that we received from our parents and family’ (Interview T. S., F, 40–60, surr. P., inactive).

Heritage and heritagisation can therefore be perceived as a ‘remedy’ against feelings of disconnection, alienation and individualisation. This is at least what the interlocutors, who expressed an appreciation for personal engagement, closer ties among people and with the environment, often emphasised: ‘Many things are happening, but nevertheless we’re not connected [...] People too often only discuss what they’d like to happen or what’s missing, but when they need to act, they rarely get involved’ (Interview T. M., F, 40–60, P., act.; cf. Interview Š. K., M, 40–60 years, P., act.). Or, as several students noted: ‘They use heritage to connect the community, they research their past to use it for a common future’ (P. J. and T. M.). However, the reasons for engaging with others are always primarily personal, while the priorities of the engaged person can easily seem general: ‘“What do you consider worth remembering from your village, life, family?” This traditional life is important to us. I’m very interested in history’ (Interview T. M., F, 40–60, surr. P., act.).

### **Heritage for Whom? For the Others!**

Conversations therefore revealed a common difference between what the interlocutors perceived as ‘their’ (personal, family, local) heritage and what, on the other hand, various institutions or individuals presented as the heritage of the Pivško region (cf. Poljak Istenič 2014; Smith 2006). For example: ‘Otherwise, Pivško does not have a cultural heritage; it is now, I think because of tourism, only being sought after and restored’ (Interview S. Z., F, 40–60, surr. P., act.). Such an officially established idea of heritage was in the interviews often perceived as a source of income, equating the past with a good marketing strategy (B. M.; cf. Fakin Bajec 2011; Poljak Istenič 2008). Another interviewee shared a similar view: ‘Pivško lakes as part of the Karst will now be inscribed on the UNESCO list of cultural heritage.<sup>16</sup> [...] Therefore, when tourists see that, they will come [...] it will mean something’ (Interview V. Š. J., M, 25–40, surr. P., act.). Some perceived the Park of the Military History in Pivka in a similar way but were more critical of such efforts: ‘I think it is artificial; it is not a real cultural heritage’ (Interview L. P., M, 25–40, surr. P., act.). Interviewees also often mentioned Martin Krpan when discussing a difference between identification<sup>17</sup> with an area and its representation. Most reportedly view Krpan as someone ‘more important for journalistic purposes

16 Native Karst appears on the UNESCO Transitional Tentative List of World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Web resource 7). Since 2019, the triangle between the spring of the Ljubljanica River and the cities of Rijeka (Croatia) and Trieste (Italy), called classic Karst, is also waiting to be included on the UNESCO list. One of the central parts of this area is the Pivka Lakes Landscape Park (Web resource 6).

17 As an individual’s (or a collective’s) process of identity formation, related to a sense of belonging and ‘self- or common-image’. It integrates an individual (group) existence

than for identifying or connecting with him' (Interview P. J., F, > 60, surr. P., act.). Another person had the following to say about him:

I think he is an artificially made-up and imposed heritage [...] we didn't know much more about him than the rest of Slovenian students who learned about him in school. Now, in the last few years, Krpan has appeared in a completely different context, one with which I personally cannot identify. (Interview S. Z., F, 40–60, surr. P., act.; cf. Interview S. Z., F, 40–60, surr. P., act.; Interview An. V., F, 40–60, surr.; P., act.; Interview M. K., M, 25–40, P., inact.; Interview L. P., M, 25–40, surr. P., act.)

For many, he is therefore a symbol of all Slovenia: 'Martin Krpan could be a symbol on any Slovenian coat-of-arms since he embodies general Slovene values. He is not only ours' (Interview P. G., F, 40–60, surr. P., act.). He became a symbol of the Pivško area because local officials appropriated him: 'It's politics. But now we have to take advantage of it' (Interview V. Š. J., M, 25–40, surr. P., act.; cf. Interview L. P., M, 40–60, surr. P., act.).<sup>18</sup> However, this political decision also caused local controversy:

How Pivka's coat of arms should look was decided together with the mayor. We discussed it in a smaller group, and since there is a hill in the municipality with a church dedicated to the Holy Trinity, Sv. Trojica, someone suggested that Martin Krpan should be on Pivka's coat of arms. The initiative started, we made a banner and had a party. The near-by towns of Cerknica and Bloke resented us for that, since there is another Sv. Trojica church in that area and they consider Krpan to be theirs. Nevertheless, we insisted that Krpan is ours. (Interview P. G., M, > 60, surr. P., act.)

Especially when reflecting on Martin Krpan or some other so-called 'local characteristics' of the region, interlocutors might have become aware of the fact that representations or even heritage can change over time. For instance, one interviewee noted: 'In the past, we didn't visit the lakes, we didn't learn about them. If anything, we had school trips to Mrzla jama,<sup>19</sup> but we never went to the lakes' (Interview P. J., F, 25–40, surr. P., act.).<sup>20</sup> Perceiving a difference

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with a sense of self-existence while at the same time differentiating him/her (or a group) vis-à-vis 'others' (Golubović 2011, 25).

18 Compare these words to those of another interlocutor: 'You see, Pivka and Martin Krpan have nothing in common. They adopted him because he is a legend' (Interview T. T., M, > 60, surr. P., act.).

19 One of the caves in the Pivško area (Web source 8).

20 Some individuals also realised that, in order to become recognised, so-called local sights or heritage is often related to or compared to something that is broadly appreciated, which might also be connected with contemporary tourist trends (see Fakin Bajec 2011, 217–226, 288). For example, they remembered how decades ago the Pivško

between heritage of the people and heritage for the people, the interlocutors also made a distinction between heritage for the locals and heritage for the tourists and visitors, with the latter predominantly serving to promote the local environment (see Dallen 2011). All these categories might well become intertwined. But especially if heritage for non-locals is determined by various professions or without much participation by the local inhabitants, then they do not necessarily feel close to it. They do not necessarily have a (positive or personal) attachment to it and are therefore not necessarily proud of it (see Fakin Bajec 2011, 287, 290). As one student's observation illustrates this: 'He thinks this is not something meaningful for the identification of the locals [...] He believes heritage should be "made" more for the locals and less for tourists and showing off' [Interview Š. K., M, > 60, P., act.). However, if such heritage is (also emotionally) connected with the everyday life of the locals, 'if there is a longer-term relationship with the presented heritage or connection to the interlocutor's everyday life' (L. P.), then people can 'adopt' such heritage. They can also accept it more easily when they 'have something to gain from the heritage', be it, for example, the (positive) recognisability of the area or an income.<sup>21</sup> The same reasons can contribute to turning an area's weakness into its advantage, as revealed by the example of the Park of the Military History in Pivka, which many locals did not approve of at first:

In the beginning, when the initiative to open the museum started, people mostly complained. Ruined buildings stood there and the locals were fed up with the army. [...] But now, the museum attracts visitors. [...] I'm not in favour of such things, but even I like it. (Interview P. G., F, 40–60, surr. P., act.)<sup>22</sup>

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lakes were promoted by referring to the prominent Postojna caves. Nowadays, on the other hand, they are associated with sustainable tourism and UNESCO's protection (Interview P. J., F, 25–40, surr. P., act.).

- 21 Heritagisation projects in which locals do not participate or projects that have nothing of benefit for them might also be perceived as harmful, since, as many interlocutors imagined, they use funds that otherwise might be available for the locals or spent on what they consider to be important or valuable. One mentioned this issue specifically in relation to the Park of the Military History Pivka: 'we have nothing from it. [...] Due to the large investment in the Park of the Military History, our villages suffer. There is no money left for other things' (Interview An. V., F, 40–60, surr. P., act.).
- 22 Another person had the following to say: 'but now they see that it attracts people, and it is a positive thing. [...] It also increases the recognisability of the municipality' (Interview P. J., F, > 60, surr. P., act.; cf. Interview L. P., M, 40–60, surr. P., act.).

The Park of the Military History in Pivka supposedly also reduces the associations between Pivka and the Perutnina Pivka company, which processes chickens as well as dirt and stench: 'They lived with Perutnina Pivka and were proud of it. When they earned money for 40 years, it didn't stink. However, the mentality changed. It wasn't the company that changed, people have' (Interview M. K., M, 40–60, surr. P., act.; cf.

Regardless of its outcome, when at least some locals participate in heritagisation, the whole process as well as its results are perceived as being much more feasible and sustainable. These results might also be considered an opportunity for income (especially for younger generations) (see Fakin Bajec 2015–2016). Nevertheless, such a stance is exceptionally rare: ‘Commercialising heritage is not something the entire community is interested in. Usually only younger and more open individuals are’ (L. P.). During such processes of heritagisation, the smallness of certain villages and communities is mostly not perceived as an imperfection, but on the contrary, as an advantage: ‘heritage can be better preserved since villagers can cooperate more easily’ (B. M.). Inhabitants of such villages are also considered better presenters of the local heritage: ‘A foreigner is not able to present something like this to the general public’ (Interview L. P., M, 25–40, *surr. P., act.*). Not everyone can perform local heritage since, according to interlocutors, he or she must not only be a local but must also be presenting ‘an authorised version of local heritage’, such that ‘tourists were advised to go there because he [a certain local representative] knew how to talk to them [and] he also knew how to sell them some local drinks, which is what’s missing now’ (Interview T. M., F, 40–60, *surr. P., act.*).

### **The Power and Uses of Heritage**

Regardless of the differences between the active and engaged interlocutors (the majority of the sample) and the few who are reportedly ‘not interested in heritage’, both groups, as the material suggests, associate heritage with a specific knowledge they supposedly do or do not possess. Such perceptions reveal how well all the interlocutors have already internalised professional, authoritarian notions of heritage as something that not just anyone can talk about, not just anyone can have, but as something that one (nowadays already as a child) learns about in school (Kockel 2007, 20–21; *cf.* Interview T. S., F, 40–60, *surr. P., inact.*). Heritage is therefore equated with specific, non-experimental knowledge, and since it is also presented through specific genres (e.g. festivals, exhibitions, trails; see Hafstein 2018b),<sup>23</sup> it is considered even more specific than and different from other kinds of knowledge. It is exactly

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Interview M. K., M, 25–40, P., *inact.*). An example also proves (however established) heritage (of Pivško) is not a representation of just any habitus (Hafstein 2018b, 95). It must be a habitus that is positive and orderly; it is a display of pleasant diversity, an aestheticised and sanitised version of habitus (*cf.* Hafstein 2018b, 167; Wilk 1995).

23 What is nowadays considered convincing or successful examples of heritage include compelling heritage design as well as personal and collective practices of intense self-persuasion. They confirm an individual to be a legitimate heir of a particular cultural form from the past, and thus, contribute to his or her deeper feelings of belonging (van de Port and Meyer 2018, 24).

the bounded space that separates this knowledge – heritage – from other comparable knowledges, and therefore, helps to attract the interested public and (hopefully) forces the development of the local environment (*cf.* Dallen 2011; Fakin Bajec 2011; Giordano 2007; Poljak Istenič 2008). Professional advice on preventing what is supposedly wrong as well as protecting what is supposedly correct or disappearing might thus be internalised (*cf.* Hafstein 2018b, 155; Wilk 1995), which is why heritagisation can also be part of a (professional) oppressive regime or a mechanism to dispossess certain people of their political and other rights.<sup>24</sup> For instance, the majority of interlocutors reportedly perceive Martin Krpan as a ‘forced’ heritage, a heritage or representation of Pivško for outsiders that offers the locals no significant economic or other benefits. If anything, they mostly related him to (regional) competition, to feelings of pride or shame, to discussions of justice or misinterpretation, which is why Martin Krpan is a prime example of an ambivalent symbol (or even heritage) of the area. His heritagisation might be considered part of the prevailing direction of contemporary heritage projects – constructed for the communities and not together with them (Waterton and Smith 2010, 7; *cf.* Fakin Bajec 2020, 93–94).<sup>25</sup>

On the other hand, members of a (local) community can also appropriate heritagisation for their own interests and choose to use it tactically (see de Certeau 2007). They might recognise something as an ‘imposed heritage’, an external threat or a reason to intervene and organise themselves, an example of which is also the present case study from Pivško. The most essential and tactical goal in such processes might not necessarily be to discover and materially present heritage of the people, with which they can emotionally connect (see Hafstein 2018b, 35), since engagement, involvement and bonding themselves might even be considered more important goals. Heritagisation might be one of the motives for activating individuals and thus contributing to two minimum contemporary conditions for establishing community as a sociological entity – it might contribute to expressing connection and belonging (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2011). Especially if heritagisation is a bottom-up and (self-)initiated process of at least a few active locals, it might function as

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24 This is the case when, for example, an external threat (in the form of commercialisation or alienation) justifies an internal (state) intervention or protection effort (see Hafstein 2018b).

25 As already mentioned, this was sensed also by the employees of the Eco-Museum of the Pivka Seasonal Lakes, who encouraged the students’ research on and promotion of the ‘real’ heritage of the locals. The research and its outcome – this article – are therefore not only critical of certain heritagisation processes (e.g. related to Martin Krpan), they at the same actively contribute to further heritagisation of the heritage of the people (see Web source 2).

a mechanism or way to create a sense of community. In this process, as the interlocutors from Pivško also expressed, emotions are crucial: if people are supposed to become attached to a heritage, it must primarily stimulate their emotions (Hafstein 2018b, 106; *cf.* Smith, Wetherell and Campbell 2018).<sup>26</sup> Through experience and emotional attachment, heritage – especially heritage of the people – can therefore connect locals, including youth, and create (at least temporary) bonds (see Fakin Bajec 2011, 47).

But if heritage is also a way of dealing with potentially dangerous differences that individuals and communities or individuals within a community meet (Waterton and Smith 2010, 10; *cf.* Hafstein 2018a, 140), what differences are revealed by the example of the ‘forced heritage’ of Martin Krpan or any other personal, family or local heritage of the people mentioned in the present case study? The usage of Martin Krpan as a local symbol or hero or even representative of heritage is an illustrative example of contemporary differentiation and competitiveness among Slovene municipalities.<sup>27</sup> It also illustrates how terminology as well as mere perceptions of what heritage is differ – not only between the municipality of Pivka and its inhabitants but also among the locals themselves. Perceptions of heritage can differ greatly in the Pivško region as well and give rise to competitive ways of defining it. Individuals (as well as institutions) are driven by various interests, anger, boredom, fears, happiness, loneliness, frustration, envy, curiosity and a range of other motivational and destructive energies (Waterton and Smith 2010, 8–9). But however temporary and negotiated people’s perceptions of heritage are, whatever their economic and political agendas, the more any heritage is affective, the more it is also effective – in providing attachments, bonds and feelings of belonging. Personal, family and local heritage of the people namely revealed alienation and disconnection as the biggest differences and threats when interlocutors compared current society with the past while (any) heritage is consequently seen as a remedy against either alienation or disconnection.

But when observed from the perspective of the locals, is the socialising power of heritage also its only potential and purpose? Let us answer the question

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26 Nevertheless, according to van de Port and Meyer, this is a distinctly romantic view in which identifying with and attachment are only possible by comparing life experiences (2018, 14). Such a fantasy-related imagination is a pre-reflective, comfortable delusion, as people do not establish relationships with things and knowledge and do not construct what is real only with their senses (and without language and reason). Given the level of distrust in what can be seen, in the representations (of heritage as well), authenticity has never been as exposed and important as it is today (van de Port and Meyer 2018, 18–19).

27 On the comparative contemporary appropriations of some local or national(ised) (Slovenian or Croatian) characters, as well as on hero-making processes in general, see, e.g. Moric and Perinić Lewis (2019) and Oroz and Škrbić Alempijević (2018).

by comparing heritage and creative communities. Creative communities prioritise individuals over capital and explore ways of working and living in the community that are new, though not completely cut off from the past. They are based on experiential learning, retrospection and self-reflection while at the same time following a collaborative logic more than a community-oriented one. This means that they are not guided by profit, but by sustainability and the core idea of community (Vodopivec 2017, 140). It seems that to a large extent, individuals might also engage in heritagisation processes in the Pivško area to achieve the very same ends. As I have already pointed out, engagement might be strategic or tactical (de Certeau 2007), while its main purpose might not be recognisability for the purposes of (mass) tourism. Above all, the people involved in heritagisation strive to create and connect with a sense of community, though the desired economic effects are also not negligible. Nevertheless, only in exceptional cases did the interlocutors perceive heritage as an opportunity to, for example, develop (new) entrepreneurial ideas, acquire additional knowledge and skills, or achieve greater social inclusion (see Fakin Bajec 2011). This is perhaps also one of the main differences between creative and heritage-related communities: according to Vodopivec (2017, 144), creativity cannot only be limited to entrepreneurship and productivity. It is related to the transformative power and direction of imagination, though equally important is how people live with and experience (their) creativity: whether it is an inspiration, a passion, a mission, an inner fire, an opportunity for cooperation or even a point of frustration. Creativity is both felt and sensed since, as a bodily experience, it contributes to one's own identity. It is an internal, intimate process, while it is also a process of connecting individuals with the environment, of creating feelings of connection, of closeness and distance, of inclusion and exclusion. Personal creativity can be distinguished from social creativity by their supposedly different goals, with the latter creating new ways of producing and exchanging, and thus, new and different mutual ties and relationships (Vodopivec 2017, 143).

What types of personal or social creativity might therefore be related to heritagisation in the Pivško region? As mentioned, new, alternative ways of producing, working and living, of identifying and connecting, new forms of solidarity, emerging in modern creative communities, are also based on self-reflection. However, when accounting for existing power and social relations in Pivško, heritagisation, as it seems, does not affect or even change them a lot. Individuals who are interested in heritagisation, regardless of the reasons and motivations, first and foremost internalise the perception of heritage as (a specific) type of 'knowledge'. This consequently empowers them as the ones with a different, special, exposed and recognised social status of 'the competent',

with specific social and symbolic capital. Nevertheless, in acting as (local) heritage-related mediators and representatives who can assert their views and interests as well as the views and interests of their fellow inhabitants, they are initially already subordinated to the authoritarian (professionally and / or politically mediated) perceptions of heritage. They unproblematically assume that heritage is intimately associated with the expression and manifestation of identity (Ferkov and Hlačer 2010, 196),<sup>28</sup> while such an inevitable connection between identity and heritage controls and legitimises group identity (Waterton and Smith 2010, 12). In relation to power centres, heritage can therefore create micro-communities and new solidarities, but at the same time it only reproduces and strengthens already existing macro-social definitions, hierarchies and positions (see Hafstein 2018b). It produces further differentiations, identifications and representations, which call for new explanations, comparisons and clarifications, competitive creativities of a specific kind – but at the same time they are not open to just anyone and, as such, are always exclusive. The power of heritage and heritage communities – especially when compared to the power of creative communities – is therefore not only limited but also orchestrated, directed and, most of all, disinterested in its own sovereignty. It is the power of learning a (heritage) game, of perhaps appropriating it for one's own interests; however, it is not a sovereign power capable of stepping outside this macro-structural game.

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28 One of the key contemporary roles of heritage is to respond to certain basic questions, namely who we are, where we come from and where we belong. As postmodern subjects faced with the puzzling circumstances of globalisation, hyper-communication and the decay of traditional frames, people seek to anchor their identity predominantly in heritage (Ferkov and Hlačer 2010, 196; cf. Graham and Howard 2008).

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### Archive material

All the material is stored at the Archive of the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

Fieldwork material 1: The Synopsis of an Interview, its Analysis and Reflection, 21 November 2018, Pivka, Male, older than 60 years. Interviewer Katja Forjan.

Fieldwork material 2: The Synopsis of an Interview, its Analysis and Reflection, 28 November 2018, Pivka, Female, younger than 25 years. Interviewer Katja Forjan.

Fieldwork material 3: Transcript of an Interview, its Analysis and Reflection, 30 November 2018, surrounding of Pivka, Female, between 40 and 60 years old. Interviewer Petra Goljevšček.

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Fieldwork material 5: The Synopsis of an Interview, its Analysis and Reflection, 3 December 2018, surrounding of Pivka, Female, between 40 and 60 years old. Interviewer Pia Jankovič.

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Fieldwork material 7: Transcript of an Interview, its Analysis and Reflection, 16 November 2018, surrounding of Pivka, Male, between 40 and 60 years old. Interviewer Matija Kenda.

Fieldwork material 8: Transcript of an Interview, its Analysis and Reflection, 10 December 2018, Pivka, Male, between 25 and 40 years old. Interviewer Matija Kenda.

Fieldwork material 9: The Synopsis of an Interview, its Analysis and Reflection, 6 December 2018, Pivka, Male, older than 60 years. Interviewer Špela Kodrič.

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Fieldwork material 16: Transcript of an Interview, its Analysis and Reflection, 12 December 2018, surrounding of Pivka, Female, between 40 and 60 years old. Interviewer Tara Milčinski.

Fieldwork material 17: Transcript of an Interview, its Analysis and Reflection, 22 November 2018, surrounding of Pivka, Male, between 25 and 40 years old. Interviewer Lea Podgoršek.

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- Fieldwork material 19: Transcript of an Interview, its Analysis and Reflection, 16 November 2018, surrounding of Pivka, Female, older than 60 years. Interviewer Primož Robnik.
- Fieldwork material 20: Transcript of an Interview, its Analysis and Reflection, 16 November 2018, surrounding of Pivka, Male, older than 60 years. Interviewer Primož Robnik.
- Fieldwork material 21: Transcript of an Interview, its Analysis and Reflection, 6 December 2018, Pivka, Female, younger than 25 years. Interviewer Teuta Sulejmani.
- Fieldwork material 22: Transcript of an Interview, its Analysis and Reflection, 6 December 2018, Pivka, Female, between 40 and 60 years old. Interviewer Teuta Sulejmani.
- Fieldwork material 23: Transcript of an Interview, its Analysis and Reflection, 7 December 2018, surrounding of Pivka, Male, between 25 and 40 years old. Interviewer Veronika Škofljanec Jagodic.
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