

# Food practices as Intangible Cultural Heritage :

## *Kimjang* as 'shared heritage ' in Two Koreas



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## 1.Introduction

Cultural value of food is unquestionable. Every country has its own food culture and the richer the history of a country is, the more aspects the cuisine of that country will have. Global food trade and the globalization of restaurant industry enables people all over the world to buy ingredients and taste dishes from places far away from where they live. The Korean cuisine is one of new culinary trends that have become popular in different parts of the world in recent decades. In this paper the focus will lie on the symbolic Korean dish called *kimch'i*, a dish and category of fermented vegetables that is mostly eaten on daily basis by Koreans during every meal. It was in the 1980's that the idea started to form within the Korean society that the most "Korean" things should be the most universal.<sup>1</sup> Korea started in the 1980's with selecting and promoting cultural contents. This resulted and is still making way for the perception how specific things are regarded as typically Korean. This was also the period in which *kimch'i* became the symbol of Korea and activities started in full scale in order to globalize *kimch'i*.<sup>2</sup> The start of this symbolization process of *kimch'i* as Korean ethnic food is said to have started in 1984 during the Summer Olympics in Los Angeles when it was designated as the official dish of the training center of athletes. On the other hand, the Seoul Olympic Games that took place in 1988 took this 'symbolization' process of *kimch'i* a step further. Since people from all around the world were going to visit Seoul to see the Olympic Games, the urge and possibility to introduce the 'Koreanness' of Korea to the world was noticed. This would also have effect on the image of Korea what till then, was being compared to China and Japan. In order to being distinguished from its neighbors in the eyes of the Western world, Korea followed the path of self-orientalism to a certain extend to show the 'Korean' sides of Korea.<sup>3</sup>

In this period *kimch'i* also started to become popular in Japan, with the rumor that the baseball team of Lotte won a game thanks to eating *kimch'i*. From that period on, Japanese business traders and tourists started buying and importing *kimch'i*. This appreciation of *kimch'i* by another country had a positive effect on the pride of Koreans and soon the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries started projects to look into the possibilities to globalize *kimch'i*.<sup>4</sup> Towards the end of the 1980's the amount of scholarly work on *kimch'i* started to increase as a result of the increased popularity of *kimch'i* in neighbor countries. Thereafter, the focus shifted to other Korean dishes and fermented sauces that have eventually also become symbolic cultural contents related to the Korean cuisine that represent the Korean diet. However, *kimch'i* has been without doubt the number one dish on the list of globalized elements of the Korean cuisine.

<sup>1</sup> 주영하(2004), "민속문화의 국제화 요구와 비교민속학의 대응" 韓國民俗學 第 40 輯,(p. 179)

<sup>2</sup> 민속원(2008), 민속 이론, 비교 민속, (한국민속학학술총서 09), (pp.570,576)

<sup>3</sup> 주영하(2004), "민속문화의 국제화 요구와 비교민속학의 대응" 韓國民俗學 第 40 輯,(p. 184)

<sup>4</sup> Idem., (pp.198-199)

Also, with the well-being trend that started in the begin of the 2000's healthy food, especially slow foods gained many attention among Koreans. Different marketing strategies are combined with well-being in order to promote food products. *Kimch'i*, as being recorded among the top five healthiest dishes is also an element on the list of foods good for well-being. One may think that these characteristics of *kimch'i* made it possible for it to be recognized as intangible heritage. However, for a food practice to be recognized as intangible heritage there are certain requirements that has to be met. Also, also prior to the nomination of *kimjang* as intangible heritage *kimch'i* was a popular dish among foreigners in different parts of the world.

*Kimch'i* or better said the practice of *kimch'i* making referred to as *kimjang* was acknowledged as intangible cultural heritage of South Korea in December 2013. Since intangible heritage deals with safeguarding traditions what are also known as living cultures it was important for South Korea to show the 'living culture of *kimjang*' in the Korean society to UNESCO. This attempt of turning *kimch'i* in intangible heritage can be seen as yet another attempt to ensure the symbolization but also the promotion and globalization of *kimch'i* as symbolic Korean food. This inscription was warmly welcomed in the Korean society and boosted the pride of Koreans who had managed to inscribe their symbolic dish in the Representative List of Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

In 2003, the UNESCO Convention for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural heritage took place in Paris where the importance of Intangible cultural Heritage of Humanity and its safeguarding was discussed. After this Convention, it can be said that a clear distinction was made between tangible and intangible heritage. The intangible heritage system has five domains it focuses on. Short after the establishment of this system it became also possible that food practices could be recognized as intangible cultural heritage. The term heritage refers to the things that we inherit, or better said what we keep of a certain inheritance. This is the case for tangible heritage but also for intangible heritage. In the case of food practices, not only the know-how of how to prepare a dish, but also the significance of that dish in a certain culture and when and how to serve can be considered as important knowledge in order to keep a certain culinary tradition alive.

In the last decades there have been written various books and articles on diverse aspects of the Korean history and culture. From 2010 on, short after the start of the second Korean wave an increasing number of scholars did research on the globalizing side of Korean culture, with the main focus on popular culture. Korean cuisine is also becoming one of the aspects of Korean culture what gains much attention. Without doubt *kimch'i* is one of the possible dishes that comes to one's mind when one thinks about Korean food. This resulted not only in an increase in academic sources in Korean language on various aspects of *kimch'i* but also an increasing number of English articles and journals are dealing with *kimch'i*. Before I started my research in detail I looked into the already existing books and academic articles that were dealing with *kimch'i* (and *kimjang*) as a dish, but also as an intangible heritage, the system through which food practices are recognized as intangible cultural heritage and the Intangible Cultural Heritage system of UNESCO.

There are numerous academic sources dealing with the meaning of intangible heritage, its value and the importance of its safeguarding. In some cases these sources also give an overview of problematic or unique cases of intangible heritage. However, it was noticeable that comparatively little was written about the position of *kimch'i* and *kimjang* as intangible heritage in the Korean society, the way it is safeguarded and the nomination of North Korea with the same element, *kimch'i* making to UNESCO. Kimjang was acknowledged as intangible heritage of South Korea in December 2013. Not long after this inscription North Korea also applied to UNESCO around March 2014 with the practice of *kimch'i* making as their intangible cultural heritage. Such cases are usually referred to as 'shared heritage' by UNESCO. I would like to point out that especially the last point I mentioned of shared heritage, especially in this case of a food practice and dish between the two Koreas has not been the subject of an academic source yet.

Therefore by focusing my research on this case I hope to contribute to further researches that may take place in this field. In this paper I will start by introducing the Korean cuisine with the main focus on *kimch'i* and *kimjang* and their importance in the Korean society. Since this food practice will be analyzed as intangible heritage I chose to use theory on intangible heritage and the enlisting system of UNESCO as my primary basis in approaching and examining this specific case. The North Korean nomination of *kimch'i* making will be analyzed in order to understand the position of *kimch'i* in the North Korean society but also the reasons behind its nomination. Finally I will be looking at the changes a cultural practice undergoes after being enlisted and entitled as intangible heritage with the focus on its perception in value.

## **2. Korean food, *Kimch'i* and *Kimjang***

Every country has its own unique food culture. The ingredients may be similar or the same compared to dishes from other countries, but depending on the preparation or storage method a dish or cooking method may be considered as unique for that culture. This is also the case with the Korean food culture. The question that may arise is what makes Korean food 'Korean'? The answer to this questions may vary depending on who is answering it. One may give examples of famous dishes while another person may give a more descriptive explanation as a result of his or her own experience with Korean food. One thing we can be sure about is that the 'Koreanness' of a Korean dish will include the detailed process that Koreans use to transform various raw materials into food that is culturally considered to have been prepared correctly.<sup>5</sup> In the Korean cuisine various ingredients are used in dishes such as soybeans, various herbs and fermented pastes. There is also a wide range of vegetables that are used in main dishes but also side dishes. This distinction I make here will become clear when we zoom in on the details of a Korean meal.

<sup>5</sup> Pettid, M.J.(2008), *Korean Cuisine, an illustrated history*, London : Reaction books,( p.10 )

Before doing that, I want to briefly look at the influence of the Korean history on the Korean cuisine. Korea as we know it now, was once a peninsula that was divided in three kingdoms, *Koguryŏ*, *Paekche* and *Silla*. *Koguryŏ* was the largest kingdom that was located in the North of the peninsula, while *Paekche* was in the Southwest and *Silla* in the Southeast of the peninsula. Since these kingdoms were active and located in different parts of the Korean peninsula and the way ingredients were processed was different in every kingdom, this resulted in a huge variety of dishes on the peninsula. This is also partly a result of the fact that the Korean peninsula consists for around the 70 percent of mountains and various herbs could be used. It was also believed that food and medicine were the same, thus that eating healthy food was the way to being healthy. During the *Chosŏn* dynasty what followed after the *Koryŏ* dynasty, extra emphasis was put on the development of a comprehensive science that covered aspects of the body in relation to diet by scholars fostered by Confucianism and East Asian cosmology.<sup>6</sup> Therefore it is said that when we look at Korean food we can see the bond between what Koreans have historically eaten and the culture of Korea.

The importance of a well-balanced meal is emphasized in Korea. A standard Korean meal consists traditionally of rice and soup for each individual with a main dish, usually stew like soup in the center of the table surrounded by little amounts of side dishes in small bowls throughout the table that people enjoy eating together without individual portions. In this paper, like mentioned previously I will focus on the fermented dish category called *kimch'i*, what is usually served as a side dish during a Korean meal. The amount served may be not much, but the importance of *kimch'i* in the Korean cuisine is noticeably huge. There is even an old saying that goes like *kimchi* is half of all the food provisions.<sup>7</sup>

A Korean meal is not complete without side dishes also known as *panch'an*. Traditionally *panch'an* is usually served in odd numbers, varying between three, five, seven or nine sorts. It is also possible to see twelve side dishes during important or formal meals. I have said before that a balanced meal is important. In the Korean cuisine, this balance is not only visible in the usage of ingredients, but we can also see that there is a harmony between colors, textures and even temperatures between dishes. This harmony does not only exist among dishes or applied to a Korean meal in general, but is also noticeable within a dish. The concept of this balance and harmony comes from the principles of the YinYang and the theory of the Five Phases also known as the five elements.<sup>8</sup> It is also said that Koreans have pursued the harmony of the 5 basic tastes (*omi*) in a Korean meal. These are the sweet, bitter, hot, salty and sour tastes. Furthermore, there is the concept of the 5 colors harmony (*obangseak*), in which the five colors also represent the five elements of the earth.

<sup>6</sup> Helstosky, C., ed.(2015), *The Routledge History of Food*, New York: Routledge, (p.61)

<sup>7</sup> Pettid, M.J.(2008), *Korean Cuisine, an illustrated history*, London : Reaction books,( p.47 )

<sup>8</sup> Solomon,K.( 2014), *Asian Pickles: Sweet, Sour, Salty, Cured and Fermented Preserves*, United States: Ten speed Press, (pp. 42-43)

## 2.1 Kimch'i

*Kimch'i* was developed early on in the Korean history in order to provide vegetables all year around. Eating fermented or pickled vegetables is not unique to Korea. There are many other varieties of fermented vegetables in other countries, such as the Japanese *tsukemono*, the Chinese pickles or the Turkish *turşu*. But what makes *kimch'i* and *kimjang* so unique and different than other similar kinds of fermented dishes? Since *kimch'i* as a dish, or better said a category of fermented dishes plays a significant role in the Korean food culture it is a matter of course to look at the underlying factors for the position of *kimch'i* in the Korean food culture.

*Kimch'i* is said to be the unmissable dish of Koreans. Although *kimch'i* is considered as an important dish, there were no records of its recipe found till the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup> In the past *kimch'i* was defined as a dish made of a mix of various fermented vegetables or fruits, roots, salt and some seasoning . Nowadays, there are more than 300 various *kimch'i* types in Korea. However, with the time the most consumed and well known *kimch'i* variant has become the *kimch'i* that is made with the *napa* cabbage, also known as *paech'ugimch'i* or Chinese cabbage *kimch'i*. This variant of *kimch'i* has become the representative form in Korea and overseas. The basic ingredients are *napa* cabbage, radish ,green onions, garlic, pepper and salt. However, depending on the household or the region the ingredients and fermentation period will vary.

Another reason for the variety in *kimch'i* sorts is a result of topographical and natural factors. With the existence of mountains in a majority of the Korean peninsula, Korea has a subarctic climate with dry and cold winters and warm and humid summers. In other words, as a result of topographical, historical and social factors we can find different varieties of *kimch'i* in different regions. Not only the ingredients but also the preparation method will be different. In the southern part of Korea the winters are milder than in the Northern part. Therefore the *kimch'i* in the south is prepared with more salt in order to preserve the vegetables used in *kimch'i*. *Kimch'i* of the southern region also contains more seafood and has a sweeter and stronger flavor.<sup>10</sup> For this reason, also due to external factors the taste of *kimch'i* will be different depending on where one eats it. Furthermore *kimch'i* is not only consumed with Korean food, but is also eaten with non- Korean food, what are usually called fusion dishes. Examples of fusion dishes are *kimch'i* pizza, *kimch'i* pasta and *kimch'i* dumplings.

The original word for *kimch'i* was *timch'ae*, what referred to the early form of *kimch'i* with fermented pickled vegetables. According to ancient sources *kimch'i* was recorded as part of the Korean diet around 760 years ago. The first forms of *kimch'i* were created around the end of the Koryŏ period. Throughout the history *kimch'i* ingredients varied from time to time. It is interesting to see how among the many varieties of *kimch'i*, *napa* cabbage *kimch'i* has become the most popular and well consumed version while ingredients such as cucumber and radish were introduced to Korea long before the

<sup>9</sup> Lee, C.H.J. (2005), *Eating Korean: from Barbeque to Kimchi, Recipes form my home*, New Jersey : John Wiley&Sons Inc.,(p. 38)

<sup>10</sup> Solomon,K.( 2014), *Asian Pickles: Sweet, Sour, Salty, Cured and Fermented Preserves*, United States: Ten speed Press, (p.45)

introduction of *napa* cabbage. It has only been about 100 years that *napa* cabbage has become a standard ingredient for *kimchi*.<sup>11</sup> The reason for this decision may lie in the fact that *napa* cabbage is easier to grow and also is able to survive the cold weather during the last months of the year, around *kimjang* time.

In order to start making *kimch'i* the vegetables that one will use are soaked in a salt solution. The best result of *kimch'i* will be reached when one uses sea salt. This is because sea salt contains more magnesium chloride what makes it possible that vegetables will remain crispy even after weeks. One might think that with the amount of salt that is used in *kimch'i* making *kimch'i* may turn out uneatable because of the salty taste. However, like mentioned before, there is a harmony between dishes of a Korean meal. The sour and salty taste of *kimch'i* will be balanced with the rice that is prepared without any salt or oil and tastes rather bland on its own. Also with the usage of ingredients such as soy sauce and fish sauce the amount of salt used can be reduced even more. Other ingredients that one must not forget are garlic and ginger that are not only used in *kimch'i* making, but are the important ingredients of dishes in the Korean cuisine. After salting the vegetables, the next step is to season the vegetables. The most used ingredient for this is mainly Korean chili peppers along with some other ingredients. In the Korean cuisine we can also find various varieties of water *kimch'i*, depending on the ingredients used along with the amount of water that is used. These kinds of *kimch'i* look rather similar to examples of fermented vegetable dishes in other countries. However, since Korean chili peppers play an important role in *kimch'i* making, it is only natural to also take a look at the underlying reasons and effects this has on *kimch'i*.

Chili peppers have not always played a significant role in making *kimch'i*, unlike the way how it seems these days. Koreans have been enjoying fermented dishes for centuries. It was only in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century that red chili peppers were introduced to Korea. This was when Portuguese traders based in Nagasaki, Japan introduced chili peppers to Koreans, which they had brought from Central America. There are a few reasons why and how red chili peppers became a major ingredient for *kimch'i* making. First of all, chili peppers give *kimch'i* its appetizing color and distinctive pungent taste. Another reason is its significant role in the fermentation process. The capsaicin it contains, prevents the taste of *kimch'i* from turning and also balances the decomposition process. It also checks the acidifying process so that vitamin C will not break down. Lastly, chili peppers contain vitamins A, B, and C. According to ancient sources, before this period Chinese chili peppers were used from time to time. There are many varieties of chili peppers that look similar. It is the sweeter taste of Korean peppers that makes them unique among other varieties. *Kimch'i* is mainly known for the benefits it has for the human body. It contains a number of organic acids, that are produced during the fermentation process which help to sterilize the digestive tract. Furthermore, *kimch'i* contains vitamins A, B1, B2 and C and depending on the amount of salted seafood added, it also becomes a source of protein, calcium and iron.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Kim K.O.(2014) , *Humanistic understanding of Kimchi and Kimjang Culture*, Gwangju City: World institute of Kimchi, (p. 13)

<sup>12</sup> Korean culture and Information Service, Ministry of culture, Sports and Tourism(2014), *Guide to Korean Culture* (pp.121-122)



During the fermentation process naturally occurring bacteria in the air convert the sugars in raw vegetables into lactic acid, acetic acid and carbon dioxide. As a result of the increasing acidity, the pH level of *kimch'i* decreases to a level that makes it possible for *kimch'i* to survive for months. The usage of salt, garlic and chili peppers also contribute to this process since they protect *kimch'i* from spoiling thanks to their antimicrobial nature. When one prepares *kimch'i*, it is recommended not to open the jar for at least one month in order to taste well fermented *kimch'i*. *Kimch'i* can survive for months in the refrigerator, but since it is eaten on daily basis and can be used in various dishes having left over *kimch'i* won't be a worry. *Kimch'i* is basically considered to have no expiration date, if stored well. However, since the fermentation process does not stop at a certain point, one can discover that the taste of *kimch'i* may become too sour to eat as a side dish. The solution to this problem is to use it as the main ingredient in for example *kimch'itchigae* (*kimch'i* stew). There are even *paech'ugimch'i* stored for 2~3 years to be used in *kimch'i* stew. Just like that, with the right ingredients, time and patience one can make *kimch'i*.

In the past it was unusual to buy *kimch'i* in a store. This was because most mothers were housewives, and it was one of their duties to make *kimch'i* at home. Due to this traditional role that mothers had, in the beginning stage it was difficult for *kimch'i* companies to make sales domestically.<sup>13</sup> Factory production of *kimch'i* started in the 1960's in order to supply *kimch'i* for the South Korean army stationed in Vietnam.<sup>14</sup> Since the 1970's also within South Korea with the increased consumption of *kimch'i*, the commercial production started to increase.

## 2.2 The practice of Kimjang

As mentioned before, *kimjang* is the practice of *kimch'i* making that takes place around November as a preparation for the long and cold winters. *Kimjang* constitutes a significant part of Korea's identity and is more than just making and sharing *kimch'i*. The *kimjang* culture was formed in an agriculture society, and still continues till the day of today. In the past, it was a general practice that most households would prepare three *kimch'i* jars for cabbage *kimch'i*, radish *kimch'i* and radish water *kimch'i*. The amount of *kimch'i* that is consumed and prepared has nowadays reduced partly due to urbanization. As a result of urbanization, it became hard for Koreans to make and store *kimch'i* in large quantities. There was no opportunity of storing *kimch'i* pots in apartments due to lack of space but also the temperature inside was not suitable for storing *kimch'i*. The solution to this problem came when the first *kimch'i* refrigerators came into the market, when Winia Mando, a mid-tier company launched in 1995 the first *kimch'i* refrigerator called 'Dimchae'.<sup>15</sup> Like mentioned before *kimchi* derives from the word *timch'ae*, meaning

<sup>13</sup> Kessel, J.M. "Preserving Korea's Kimchi", *The New York Times*, 29 July 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/video/business/100000003736899/kimchis-identity-crisis.html>

<sup>14</sup> Solomon, K. (2014), *Asian Pickles: Sweet, Sour, Salty, Cured and Fermented Preserves*, United States: Ten speed Press, (p.39)

<sup>15</sup> Yoon, J.Y., "Kimchi refrigerator maintains taste of fermented food", *The Korea Times*, 21 Nov. 2011, [https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/tech/2013/01/133\\_99236.html](https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/tech/2013/01/133_99236.html)

vegetables in salt water. Nowadays, all major electronic brands in Korea produce *kimch'i* refrigerators, making it possible for Koreans to enjoy the consumption of *kimch'i* and the continuation of *kimjang* culture with convenience. It is even so that a *kimch'i* refrigerator is one of the most requested wedding gifts of modern day Koreans.<sup>16</sup>

The period for *kimjang* is usually around November. In this period one can see people buy large amounts of *kimch'i* ingredients. Depending on the size of the family a household prepares around the 100~200 *Napa* cabbages in order to make *paech'ugimch'i*, since this type of *kimch'i* is enjoyed most in winter. *Kimjang* is not merely making of a fermented dish as preparation for the winter months. It is considered as a shared activity where people come together, help each other and enjoy their time while chatting with each other. Preparing *kimch'i* during *kimjang* is the task of women. Usually, *kimjang* lasts for 2 ~3 days. During this time women within the family, female neighbors and friends gather together and share the tasks in order to successfully finish *kimjang* and prepare enough *kimch'i* for the household of the woman they are helping. When the *kimjang* at one household is finished, all the women move to another woman's house to also help there out with *kimjang*. This continues till everyone has prepared enough, usually a huge amount of *kimch'i* in large *kimch'i* jars that will last during the winter with the help of family, friends and neighbors. In some cases we can also see men participating in *kimjang*. They usually bring the ingredients and wash the vegetables, since it is eventually the woman of the household that decides on the taste of the *kimch'i* along with the others. The way *kimch'i* and *kimjang* had been kept alive was mostly by oral transmission by women to women. This can be a mother teaching it to her daughter but also to her daughter-in-law. The knowledge and practical skills to make good *kimch'i* were regarded as important know-how in order to become a good mother and wife.

This is quite understandable since we are talking about a dish that is eaten on daily basis almost during every meal. In the period prior to *kimjang*, the *kimjang* index is shared through news, to inform people about the price of the *kimch'i* ingredients, and the best day for *kimjang* is shared. As for 2015 the best period for *kimjang* is said to be between the 6<sup>th</sup>~15<sup>th</sup> of November. As stated in the *kimjang* index of 2015 the price of *napa* cabbage and Korean radish are stable in this period. However, the price of the other ingredients such as garlic, onions and salted seafood that are used in the *kimch'i* sauce are rather on the high side and have increased in price noticeably. In this period there are also events organized where people can voluntarily participate in *kimjang* in order to make *kimch'i* for people who cannot participate in *kimjang* due to financial reasons or are too old. Therefore these events are usually announced as event where love is shared along with *kimch'i* in order to emphasize the importance of the community as one group caring for each other.

<sup>16</sup> Solomon, K. (2014), *Asian Pickles: Sweet, Sour, Salty, Cured and Fermented Preserves*, United States: Ten speed Press, (p.41)

Kimjang is still practiced in the Korean society. However, it does not take as often place as it was the case in the past. With the changing lifestyles as a result of westernization in the name of modernization, the consumption patterns of Koreans have changed over the years. As mentioned previously people are eating more western food. For example, approximately 10 years ago the *kimch'i* consumption was about 100 grams a day per person. Currently the consumption has decreased and is only about 60 grams per day. There are many circumstances that play a role in the consumption and the kind of *kimch'i* that is consumed. Economic and technological development, but also the growing gap in social and economic status affected and still affects the production and consumption of *kimch'i*. As a result of this we can see that these days Chinese made *kimch'i* imports are widely available in South Korea. These imported variants of *kimch'i* from China are compared to the domestic versions of Korean *kimch'i* cheaper in price, what makes it for Korean producers hard to compete with.<sup>17</sup> The majority of restaurants in Seoul reported that they use *kimch'i* from China. Chinese *kimch'i* is cheaper, but also the taste and quality is said to be different from the original Korean *kimch'i*. Not only *kimchi* experts, but also consumers indicated that the taste is different and too salty. One of the main reasons for the difference in taste comes from the fact that Chinese chili peppers have a sour taste. The question arises whether this difference in quality and taste really matters much ?

Even if the difference in quality and taste is noticeable, it is said that more than 95 percent of Korean restaurants, schools and hospitals use Chinese *kimch'i*. The ironic fact here is while Chinese *kimch'i* seems to be dominating the Korean market, Korean *kimch'i* is virtually forbidden in China.<sup>18</sup> Here the inconsistency of the theoretical position of Korean *kimch'i* and the practical position of rather Chinese *kimch'i* is visible. There is a high possibility that the taste Chinese *kimch'i* is indeed different and not as good as Korean *kimch'i*. However, even when this is the case, one still gets in the most cases Chinese *kimch'i* on table when eating at a Korean restaurant. The majority of working Koreans eats at a restaurant for lunch, sometimes even for dinner since eating out in Korea is not very expensive. A standard meal with rice, soup or stew along with side dishes will cost around the 4 or 6 US dollars. It is also not the case that they will refuse to eat the less tasty *kimch'i* that is served, since it is an important dish of the meal. However, since *kimjang* is less often practiced in big cities due to the participation of women in the labor market, in most cases Koreans are bound to eat factory made *kimch'i*. When we look at the Koreans that don't own any business where *kimch'i* is sold, we see that due to the busy lives of people and the change of lifestyle in the modern society, people can't find the time and energy to make their own *kimch'i* at home in large quantities.

<sup>17</sup> Kessel, J.M. " Preserving Korea's Kimchi", *The New York Times*, 29 July 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/video/business/100000003736899/kimchis-identity-crisis.html>

<sup>18</sup> Yonghap News, " S. Korea suffers trade deficit due to surging Chinese imports", 17 May 2015, <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/news/2015/05/17/0200000000AEN20150517001200315.html>

As times changed convenience became important for most people. Being able to buy ready-made food in just a few seconds without losing any time are a quick option for the busy lives of people . This was also the case with *kimch'i*. Even though it was the task of women in the household to prepare *kimch'i*, as women started to participate in the labor market making *kimch'i* lost its priority in the to do list of housewives. Mass production of *kimch'i* made it possible for everyone to buy ready-made fermented *kimch'i* packaged in various quantities. It is also possible to buy salted cabbage so that the consumer can make *kimch'i* in a shorter time, more conveniently with the *kimch'i* sauce ingredients they want. Some critics question whether it is possible that the consumption of *kimch'i* will disappear in the Korean society? According to some experts on *kimch'i* and the Korean gastronomy, even though the present consumption pattern is lower than in the past, however since *kimch'i* is considered as maybe the most important side dish on the Korean table, it seems that there is little chance that the consumption of *kimch'i* will disappear completely.

Nowadays it is not only Koreans that eat *kimch'i*, but thanks to the success of the Korean wave (Hallyu) overseas, the number of foreigners interested in Korea and Korean culture is increasing every day. Since food culture is an important part of a country's overall culture it is unimaginable for foreigners not to have seen or heard about Korean food. Most of them have tried Korean food or *kimch'i* at least once, or maybe even tried making it. It is noticeable how food is to some extent slowly also becoming part of the Korean wave and playing an indirect role in nation branding. There are various projects and strategies used as part of nation branding in order to introduce Korean food to the world, where I will focus on later. The recognition of *kimch'i* as intangible heritage by UNESCO has become yet another reason for Koreans to be proud on their culture.

### **3. UNESCO and Intangible Cultural Heritage in Korea**

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, also known as UNESCO was founded in 1945. UNESCO is a specialized agency of the United Nations that has a mandate in international cooperation in the fields of education, science, culture and communication. The main role of UNESCO is setting standards to forge universal agreements on emerging issues. It also has a assisting role for its 195 member states in building on their own human and institutional capacities.<sup>19</sup> Culture is one of the fields where UNESCO has been active in. This field is divided in the subfields that focus on world heritage, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Heritage at Risk, Culture for Sustainable Development, Diversity in Cultural expressions, Arts & artists, Museums and Underwater Cultural Heritage. As previously mentioned, in this paper I will be focusing on the subfield of Intangible heritage and will analyze the contemporary role and position of intangible cultural heritage in Korea and the influence that 'labeling' a certain practice as intangible heritage has on the perception of that practice by communities .

<sup>19</sup> UNESCO (2009), "Register of Best Safeguarding Practices", (p. 8), <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/06910-EN.pdf>

Since the foundation of UNESCO various multilateral treaties have contributed to giving meaning to cultural heritage.<sup>20</sup> The international law applicable to cultural property has undergone a remarkable progress and change in the last fifty years. There has been various initiatives to develop international law for intangible heritage and living manifestations of culture. The first initiative took place in 1989 and is represented by the UNESCO *Recommendation of the Safeguarding of traditional Culture and Folklore* what focused on the safeguarding of traditions.<sup>21</sup> In the course of time, there were two other initiatives by UNESCO to broaden the scope of the safeguarding of living cultures. One of them was the adaptation of directive guidelines for the safeguarding of living cultures in order to guarantee the protection of traditional arts and craft from disappearing. The second initiative was the program that was approved by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1997 for the proclamation of *Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity*.<sup>22</sup> The aim of this program was to select the forms and places of celebration of cultural traditions, through international competition.

At a later stage, in 2001 during a meeting with experts organized by UNESCO in Italy, the definition of the concept of “intangible heritage” was formulated as:

*“[a]ny non-corporeal manifestation of tradition-based creativity, spontaneously originated and developed within a cultural community by which it is perceived to be an important component or reflection of the community’s social or cultural identity[, including], besides the immaterial product of the tradition based creations, the social, intellectual and cultural processes that from generation to generation, by oral transmission, by imitation or by other means of learning have made possible the development of a distinct cultural tradition whose preservation and protection is important for the safeguarding of the cultural diversity and creativity of humanity”<sup>23</sup>*

This definition was afterwards slightly changed and eventually adopted in the text of the Convention for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003 and entered into force begin 2006. As follows, intangible heritage was defined as:

*the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith—that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development <sup>24</sup>*

<sup>20</sup> Borelli,S. and Lenzerini,F.(2012) , *Cultural Heritage, Cultural Rights, Cultural Diversity*, Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, (pp.3-5)

<sup>21</sup> UNESCO, “Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore”, 15 Nov. 1989, [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=13141&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13141&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

<sup>22</sup> Borelli,S. and Lenzerini,F.(2012) , *Cultural Heritage, Cultural Rights, Cultural Diversity*, Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers,(pp.21-22)

<sup>23</sup> Idem., (pp.22-23)

<sup>24</sup> UNESCO(2003), “Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003”, [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=17716&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=17716&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

Like we can see in this definition, human beings are placed in the center of this system. There have been critiques on this definition because it is including too much. However, it has been noted that these critics fail to recognize the potential for the definition of intangible cultural heritage to change both the characterization and management of heritage through the relocation of the human at the center of the system. Another point is that this definition stresses the continuity between tangible and intangible heritage with the reference to “cultural spaces”. This is because some forms of intangible heritage are closely linked to a place, or better said a geographical space. The 2003 Convention of UNESCO for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage entered into force in 2006. The convention claims to be representing and including communities by the establishment of a model that helps to safeguard intangible heritage in a sustainable way without freezing it in a timeless mold.<sup>25</sup> There are three intangible heritage related lists that the Committee of the Convention has published. These are the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, the Register List of Best Safeguarding Practices and the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The first one is the list for Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. The aim of the Convention for the intangible heritage in this list is to take appropriate safeguarding measures. The second one is the Register of best safeguarding practices. This list contains practices that the Intergovernmental Committee periodically selects among the submitted proposals, primarily containing projects and activities for safeguarding intangible heritage that reflect the principles and objectives of the Convention in the best way.<sup>26</sup> Finally, there is the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The aim of this list is to ensure a better visibility of the elements inscribed on the list and to increase the awareness of its significance. States that want to have their elements inscribed in one of these list in order to get their elements recognized by UNESCO can submit their nomination dossier, usually along with a video file introducing the element to UNESCO. The goal of this nomination process is to demonstrate that the criteria to be inscribed on these lists is met. As of 2014 the Representative List contains 314 elements while the Urgent Safeguarding list has 38 elements and the Register List 12 elements. Since the practice of *kimjang* is inscribed in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the focus of this paper will mainly lie on this list and the elements inscribed on it.

Before going in detail on intangible heritage it is first of all important to look at the general perception of cultural heritage. In 1986 John Merryman wrote in his article that there are two ways of thinking about cultural property.<sup>27</sup> The first one is the nationalistic way and the second one is the cosmopolitan way. The nationalistic way conceives cultural property as a part of the nation, with the desire of the governments to retain it and limit its international circulation. On the other hand, the cosmopolitan way looks at

<sup>25</sup> Labadi, S.(2012), “Intangible cultural heritage convention”, *UNESCO, cultural heritage and outstanding universal value*, (pp. 127-129)

<sup>26</sup> UNESCO (2009), “Register of Best Safeguarding Practices”, (p. 7), <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/06910-EN.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> Merryman, J. (1986), “Two Ways of thinking about Cultural Property”, *The American Journal of International Law*, (Vol.80 ,pp.831-841)

cultural property as heritage of humanity and aims to facilitate exchange and cultural understanding among different people in the world to support a broad access and circulation. Cultural property can be divided into tangible and intangible ones. The focus in this paper will mainly lie on intangible cultural heritage, since *kimjang* is intangible cultural heritage of Korea. One of the ways to see cultural property is thus by seeing it as a set of human skills and crafts as part of an unique tradition what is nowadays called "intangible cultural heritage".

As times change traditions and the way they are practiced may change slightly or totally since they are being recreated as we read in the description. That is why intangible heritage has to be regarded as a living and constantly changing practice. This also means that by constantly recreating heritage authenticity cannot be applied to intangible cultural heritage. With this reason in mind the 2003 Convention chose consciously to omit the term "folklore" in its texts in order to prevent fossilization of heritage by inscription in the list of Intangible cultural heritage.<sup>28</sup> The assumption that the Convention for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage is a part of the World Heritage Convention is wrong. This assumption comes probably from the fact that both were adopted by UNESCO and deal with heritage. For intangible heritage to be kept alive it is important that it is protected and transmitted to future generations. However, for a very long time, on international level there was more focus on the protection of tangible heritage such as artistic and monumental properties. The purposes of the Convention are to safeguard intangible cultural heritage, ensure respect for it, raise awareness about it and provide for international cooperation and assistance for it. There are five criteria required to which the element selected by the State Party has to meet in order to be accepted and inscribed as intangible heritage. These requirements are stated as the follows:

*R.1 The element constitutes intangible cultural heritage as defined in Article 2 of the Convention.*

*R.2 Inscription of the element will contribute to ensuring visibility and awareness of the significance of the intangible cultural heritage and to encouraging dialogue, thus reflecting cultural diversity worldwide and testifying to human creativity.*

*R.3 Safeguarding measures are elaborated that may protect and promote the element.*

*R.4 The element has been nominated following the widest possible participation of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned and with their free, prior and informed consent.*

*R.5 The element is included in an inventory of the intangible cultural heritage present in the territory(ies) of the submitting State(s) Party(ies), as defined in Article 11 and Article 12 of the Convention.*<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Labadi, S.(2012), "Intangible cultural heritage convention", *Unesco, cultural heritage and outstanding universal value*, (pp.131-132)

<sup>29</sup> UNESCO, " Procedure of inscription of elements on the Lists and of selection of Best Safeguarding Practices", <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/procedure-of-inscription-00809>

UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage proposed 5 domains in which intangible cultural heritage can be manifested.<sup>30</sup> These are the following domains:

- *Oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage*
- *Performing arts*
- *Social Practices, rituals and festive events*
- *Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe*
- *Traditional craftsmanship*

It is often the case that the same manifest belongs to two or more different domains. For instance, in the conclusions of the Expert Meeting on food practices held in Vitré in 2009, it is remarked that food practices have an inter-sectoral dimension as regards the domains mentioned.<sup>31</sup> It is also noteworthy to mention that the 2003 Convention for intangible heritage is often associated with non-western countries while the world heritage system is considered to be limited to the west.<sup>32</sup> However, we can see that this assumption is incorrect, since the present list of intangible cultural heritage also contains cultural heritage from other parts of the world. This assumption may have arisen from the fact that Asia, especially East Asia has a larger quantity of recognized intangible heritage in comparison to other parts of the world.

Korea joined the Convention on 9 February 2005 and became the 11<sup>th</sup> member of the Convention. By itself, the intangible heritage that we can find in Korea covers around 30 percent of all the intangible heritage assets that can be found in the Asia- Pacific region. In the representative list of elements that are recognized as intangible cultural heritage of humanity in Korea we can find 17 cultural traditional practices that are unique to Korea. The first 3 elements on this list were inscribed in 2008 and were the Kangnŭng tanoje (or Gangneung Danoje) festival, *p'ansori* and the Royal ancestral ritual in the Chongmyo shrine and its music.<sup>33</sup> In 2013 *Kimjang*; the making and sharing of *kimch'i* was inscribed on this list. It is noticeable that the practice of *kimjang* is the only traditional element in this list that entirely focuses on the making and sharing of *kimch'i*. *Kimch'i* is regarded as one of the unmissable dishes of a Korean meal. The recognition of *Kimjang* culture by UNESCO and the inscription in the representative list of intangible heritage boosted the pride of Koreans but also increased their awareness of the

<sup>30</sup> UNESCO, "Intangible cultural Heritage Domains", <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/01857-EN.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> Borelli, S. and Lenzerini, F. (2012), *Cultural Heritage, Cultural Rights, Cultural Diversity*, (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff publishers) (p.181)

<sup>32</sup> Labadi, S. (2012), "Intangible cultural heritage convention", in *Unesco, cultural heritage and outstanding universal value*, United Kingdom: AltaMira Press, (p.130)

<sup>33</sup> On the following link the elements on the lists of intangible cultural heritage and information about other inscribed cultural and traditional practices can be found, <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00311&topic=mp&cp=KR>



intangible cultural properties of Korea. It is also said that this shows how the intangible cultural asset protection policy of Korea has expanded from cultural asset to intangible cultural heritage.<sup>34</sup>

### 3.1 Food practices as intangible heritage and the role of communities

Food is essential for existence in all communities and is an important part of every culture. There are countless ways of turning a few simple ingredients through different preparation methods into unique dishes. By taking a look at the consumption patterns of a country we can to some extent guess the quality of the food-culture of a country. Just like the way Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin wrote in his book *The Physiology of Taste* in 1825, "*Dis-moi ce que tu manges, je te dirai ce que tu es.*" meaning "Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are". By taking a look at the food culture of a country we can understand a society's identity and social customs. Since *kimjang* is a part of the Korean culture, and the product this practice brings alive, *kimch'i*, is regarded as the representative food of Korea, it is necessary to take a look at the position of *kimch'i* and *kimjang* in the Korean culture and also in a later stage analyze their indirect functional role in nation branding and self-identification of Korea.

It is not the first time that a certain dish as part of a cultural practice is inscribed in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Also in other countries we can find similar cultural practices where a certain dish plays a significant role. The most well-known example will probably be the Mediterranean diet<sup>35</sup> of for example Italy and Greece. We can also think of more explicit cases such as the *Krakelingen* (ring shaped breads) and *Tonnekensbrand* from Belgium, the *Licitar* (gingerbread) tradition from Northern Croatia or the Turkish coffee tradition from Turkey. However, unlike *kimch'i* it is noticeable that these examples of dishes are not consumed on daily basis. I have already mentioned that the *Kimjang* culture is a significant practice in Korea. For food to be regarded as intangible heritage it is not enough that it can be seen as an instrument to bring people together. The role of communities, groups and individuals is also important. This is because the objective of safeguarding intangible heritage cannot be reached without the participation of these parties.

In the definition of Intangible Cultural Heritage we saw that communities are the main characters in this description. They are not only described as the bearers of intangible cultural heritage but also are seen as the arbitrators of what should be considered as such.<sup>36</sup> The role of communities is described as "a response to the very specific character of Intangible Cultural Heritage that exist only in enactment by practitioners and therefore, whose continued practice depends wholly on the ability and

<sup>34</sup> Kim K.O.(2014) , *Humanistic understanding of Kimchi and Kimjang Culture*, Gwangju City: World institute of Kimchi ,(pp.35-36)

<sup>35</sup> Inscribed in 2013 in the Representative list of ICH of Humanity for the countries Croatia, Spain, Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Morocco and Portugal,  
<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00011&RL=00884>

<sup>36</sup> Labadi, S.(2012), "Intangible cultural heritage convention" in ,*Unesco, cultural heritage and outstanding universal value*, United Kingdom: AltaMira Press (p.132)

willingness of the cultural group and/or community concerned". In other words, it is the task of individuals of a community to sustain their knowledge, skills and practices in order to keep their intangible cultural heritage alive.<sup>37</sup> However, on the other hand according to Article 15 of the Convention each State Party should endeavour to ensure the widest possible participation of communities, groups and individuals that create maintain, transmit and manage this heritage actively.<sup>38</sup> It is noticeable that, while the participation of communities is emphasized, there is no definition given of what we have to imagine when encountering this term. Since the participating parties are communities, groups and individuals, and knowing that communities represent a larger amount of people than groups, communities in this case can be seen for example as a nation. During the expert meeting held in June 2002 prior to the establishment of the 2003 Convention, there was a glossary prepared with definitions of intangible heritage related terms. In this glossary a community is described as :

*"People who share a self-ascribed sense of connectedness. This may be manifested, for example, in a feeling of identity or in common behavior, as well as in activities and territory. Individuals can belong to more than one community."*<sup>39</sup>

Participation in all levels of the community is one of the important requirements for an element or tradition to be recognized as intangible heritage.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, the Convention asks States to take the required measures to ensure a high level of participation of communities, groups and when appropriate also individuals that create, maintain but also transmit a certain heritage. It is also partly up to the participants in a community to feel responsible for active participation in the manifestation of the intangible cultural heritage that belongs to their community. They have to decide for themselves whether they will contribute to this process by being a practitioner or as a member of the audience. When we apply this idea to the Korean case of the *kimjang* culture, the roles of members of a community can be seen as making *kimch'i*, assisting *kimjang*, eating *kimch'i*, selling *kimch'i* et cetera. The nomination form for inscription also requests the participating State parties to identify the communities, groups and individuals concerned with the element.

As for the 'active' participation of the communities, regardless of the element some people only decide to support the inclusion of the element on one of the lists of UNESCO. However, in the case of Korea, since *kimch'i* is the main side dish of the Korean table, we can speak of active participation since *kimjang* is being prepared and consumed. We can see this as, for example deciding on whether or not to make *kimch'i*. As a final note I would like to point out that , since groups and individuals are a part of a community, it is

<sup>37</sup> Idem., (pp.132-133)

<sup>38</sup> UNESCO, "Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage 2003"; Article 15 [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=17716&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=17716&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

<sup>39</sup> UNESCO, " Expert meeting on "Intangible Cultural Heritage - Establishment of a Glossary"", Paris, 10-12 Jun. 2002, <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/00265.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> UNESCO, " Criteria and timetable of inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity" , <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00173#TOC1>

a matter of course that they also contribute to the safeguarding, manifesting and transmitting process of intangible heritage. Prior to the application to UNESCO surveys have taken place to see how the Koreans thought about applying to UNESCO with *kimjang* as intangible cultural heritage. It is said that the results showed that 99% of the participants had positive thoughts about this idea. By holding this survey the opinions of Koreans became clear and at the same time different levels of the Korean community elaborated in the nomination process, which was one of the requirements of the convention. In March 2012, South Korea applied to UNESCO with the request to register the Korean *kimjang* culture as intangible cultural heritage in need of safeguarding in order to emphasize the importance of the preservation and transmission of this cultural activity to the next generations.<sup>41</sup> The underlying motive for the application was to increase Korean's awareness of the intangible heritage, that is a part of the Korean culture, but also to receive worldwide recognition for this important cultural activity that has been a part of the Korean culture for centuries. Not to mention, the recognition of the Kimjang culture as intangible heritage by UNESCO would also contribute to the kimch'i (consumption) culture at home but also overseas. In the final stage of the application the Committee for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage decided that the Kimjang culture corresponds with the criteria for inscription on the Representative list of intangible cultural heritage of humanity. The following reasons were given for the approval of this application :

*R.1: Transmitted through generations in everyday family life, Kimjang allows Koreans to practice the spirit of sharing among neighbors, while promoting solidarity and providing them a sense of identity and belonging;*

*R.2: Inscription of Kimjang could contribute to the visibility of intangible cultural heritage by enhancing dialogue among different communities nationally and internationally that practice food ways that similarly make creative use of natural resources;*

*R.3: Although Kimjang is spontaneously transmitted within Korean families, measures are proposed to strengthen its safeguarding including formal education in school curricula and adoption of legislative provisions on measures for its promotion, as well as measures to mitigate industrialization of kimchi-making;*

*R.4: Korean communities at three different levels – general public, local governments and academia – have participated through surveys in the elaboration of the nomination and have provided their free, prior and informed consent;*

*R.5: After a multi-year process of consultation with communities concerned and civil society organizations, Kimjang was included in 2011 in the State Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage maintained by the Cultural Heritage Administration.*<sup>42</sup>

Short after the inscription of *kimjang* in the Representative List as intangible heritage of Republic of Korea, North Korea also applied to UNESCO with the practice of *kimch'i* making to be recognized as their intangible cultural heritage. The fact that the two

<sup>41</sup> Kim K.O.(2014) , Humanistic understanding of Kimchi and Kimjang Culture, Gwangju City: World institute of Kimchi , (pp.32-34)

<sup>42</sup> UNESCO, “ Kimjang, making and sharing kimchi in the Republic of Korea” , <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/RL/00881>

Koreas that used to be one in the past, applied to UNESCO with the same element to be recognized as their intangible cultural heritage is also noteworthy to look at. In the next part of this paper I will focus on the North Korean application by comparing the content of the nomination form with the South Korean nomination form and also analyzing the safeguarding measures that are practiced in both Koreas in order to keep the *kimjang* culture alive.

#### 4. Shared Heritage and safeguarding kimjang

As mentioned before both South Korea and North Korea applied to UNESCO to have *kimjang* recognized as their intangible cultural heritage. Also in the past there have been similar cases, some still existing about the origin of a dish or practice what would lead to tensions among countries. The Convention emphasizes the moving and changing character of intangible heritage and defies national boundaries. However, in some cases State parties associate their intangible heritage with claims of territory, origin and antecedence.<sup>43</sup> One example of this is exemplified in the case of tension between Greece and Turkey by the inscription of Karagöz in the Representative list. Karagöz is a type of shadow theater that was nominated by Turkey in 2009. After this application was accepted by the Convention Greece claimed that Karagöz was of Greece. In order to prevent such territorial claims, UNESCO organized in 2010 a meeting that focused on 'shared heritage' that goes beyond geographical borders with the aim to encourage international cooperation in safeguarding intangible heritage and prevent conflicts between countries about the ownership of intangible heritage. This meeting is also said to have stressed the importance of multinational nominations concerning the same element and proposed by more than one country as a way of recognizing the fluid nature of intangible cultural heritage and moving beyond claims of origin and precedence.

Like mentioned before I will now look at the case of North Korea and South Korea, where both applied to UNESCO with the same element. Even though the original names that are put in the application form for the nomination are not the same, they both refer to the process of making *kimch'i*. This case is slightly different than the case of Karagöz nominated by two different countries without any cultural connection to each other. In the case of the two Koreas, they used to be one country before the Korean war that divided them in two separate nations that followed their own path with different and opposing ideologies. South Korea was the first to take the initiative to apply to UNESCO with *kimjang* as South Korean intangible cultural heritage. Short after "kimjang; making and sharing *kimch'i*" was recognized by UNESCO and was inscribed in the Representative list of the Intangible cultural heritage of Humanity, North Korea also decided to apply to UNESCO with *kimch'i* making to be recognized as their intangible heritage. The details of this nomination will be discussed in a latter part of this chapter.

<sup>43</sup> Labadi, S.(2012), "Intangible cultural heritage convention", in *UNESCO, cultural heritage and outstanding universal value*, United Kingdom: AltaMira Press, (pp.140-142)

As previously noted , the number of intangible heritage that is unique to Korea covers around 30 percent of all the intangible heritage assets that can be found in the Asia Pacific region. Among the elements that are inscribed in the intangible heritage list of UNESCO, the practice of *kimjang* is the only element that is directly related to food, in other words, the only food practice that is recognized as intangible heritage. However, it is noteworthy, that prior to this initiative South Korea applied to UNESCO to register the Royal Cuisine of the Chosŏn dynasty as intangible heritage. This application was rejected because it did not meet the all the five criteria of the Committee that were enlisted earlier in this paper. The application of this element was only able to meet two criteria that were denoted as R3 and R5. Another noticeable point is that short after the rejection of Royal Cuisine of Chosŏn as intangible heritage the nomination form for the inscription of *kimjang* was sent to UNESCO. In order to understand this second attempt of South Korea, to turn another food practice into intangible heritage, I want to briefly look at the details of the procedure prior to the actual inscription.

Firstly, the procedure to inscribe an element on the Representative List has three phases divided as preparation and submission, evaluation and examination and is spread over two years. The nominations must be received by the Secretariat before 31 March of year 1, while on the other hand the final examination of the elements and the decision is announced in November/ December of year 2. In the case of nomination of the Royal cuisine of Chosŏn the nomination forms were sent to the Secretariat before 31 March 2010, while the final examination and decision making took place in the week of 22-29 November 2011 during the 6<sup>th</sup> Committee (6.COM). The interesting point here is that *kimjang* was inscribed in the Representative List in December 2013 during the 8<sup>th</sup> Committee (8.COM), what means that the application forms were sent in before 31 March 2012, what is only four months after the decision was made that the Royal Cuisine of Chosŏn would not be recognized as intangible heritage by UNESCO. In this case the question arises whether applying to UNESCO with *kimjang* as intangible heritage was a plan B of South Korea, set up only within those 4 months, after their first attempt to turn a Korean ‘ food practice’ into intangible heritage was failed, or that South Korea originally was planning on turning multiple Korean food practices into intangible heritage, and *kimjang* become the first one on the list since the previous application with Royal Cuisine was rejected?

First of all, I want to mention the difference in perception of these two applications. It is said that during the application of the Royal cuisine of Chosŏn , this element was rather seen as simply being traditional food, while in the case of *kimch'i* and *kimjang* the focus lied more in the preparation process of it where a community is involved. Another important point is noted that while *kimch'i* and *kimjang* is enjoyed in every level of the society, this cannot be said about Royal food.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Yonhap News, “<아제르바이잔 발 낭보, 세계로 본격진출하는 김치>”, 05 Dec. 2013, <http://www.yonhapnews.co.kr/bulletin/2013/12/05/0200000000AKR20131205190600005.HTML?from=search>

A State party can send in multiple nomination forms for various elements. The result of this is visible in the years 2010 and 2011 in which 3 elements were inscribed as intangible heritage representing South Korea. Furthermore, the idea of globalizing the most Korean traditional elements was also existing in the 1980's as mentioned earlier in this paper. In 2015, the 22<sup>nd</sup> Kwangju *Kimch'i* Festival was held what also shows us that the attempts to globalize *kimch'i* dates back to earlier than the application to UNESCO. In the Nomination form of *kimjang* sent by South Korea it was stated that a survey was held in 2011 by the Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea in order to discover the opinions of citizens on the nomination of *kimjang* as intangible heritage. From these points we can presume that the nomination of *kimjang* was not a plan B but rather another attempt to inscribe a Korean food practice in the list of intangible cultural heritage representing South Korea. In the nomination form and sources referring to the inscription of *kimjang* it is noted that the survey among citizens took place in 2011. However, when we take a look at the website of the Cultural Heritage Administration we can see that the period in which this survey was held was between 1-29 February 2012, what was an interesting point I discovered while analyzing the nomination procedure of *kimjang* culture.

It seems that with the significance of *kimch'i* and *kimjang* in the Korean culture and the existing determination to globalize elements from the Korean cuisine, South Korea managed to nominate another food practice unique to their culture on time in order to let it be examined by UNESCO to be recognized as intangible heritage. The failed attempt of 'labeling' the Royal cuisine of Chosŏn as intangible heritage was disappointing for Korea. However, on the other hand, since this application only met two of the five criteria, in the 4 months' time between the decision of the one and the nomination of the other, South Korea was able to focus on various aspects of *kimjang* culture to make sure they would meet all the five criteria in order to be inscribed in the Representative List. After the *kimjang* culture was recognized as intangible heritage Korea was able to analyze the two food practices they nominated and were able to see the difference in the theoretical and practical status of these two food practices for Koreans. Since the roots of Royal cuisine dates back to an important dynasty in the Korean history, this element surely carries the elegance and rich tradition of this dynasty. However, in the case of turning such an element into intangible heritage, with keeping in mind that it has to be kept alive by all levels of communities, groups and individuals we can see that *kimjang* has a stronger position compared to the Royal cuisine.

In the case of *kimjang* culture, in terms of visuality the Royal Cuisine of Chosŏn may give one a more traditional feeling, however when we look at the actual practice of these two elements and the consumption of the final products, we can see that *kimjang* and *kimch'i* have a stronger position in everyday life in all classes of the society, while this cannot be said for the practice and consumption of the Royal cuisine. Furthermore, another reason why this dish is chosen to be nominated as the intangible heritage representing Korea comes from the underlying idea that the aggressive red color of *kimch'i* stands for energy and masculinity.

It is also said that *kimch'i* being an unsophisticated and inexpensive dish, represented the self-image of Koreans, what changed from being inferior in many aspects into a higher and stronger position through their hard work.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, it is comprehensible that the *kimjang* culture was able to find a position in the list of intangible cultural heritage of humanity.

#### 4.1. North Korea's nomination of *kimjang*

As remarked previously North Korea's nomination form was sent in soon after the South Korean nomination was accepted by the Committee and *kimjang* was inscribed on the Representative List. Before going in detail on the North Korean nomination with the same practice, I want to briefly focus on another case of 'shared heritage' of the two Koreas and the similarities I encountered with the nomination of *kimjang* culture. This is the case of the *Arirang* folk song what has gained the position of intangible heritage in both South Korea and North Korea and is inscribed in the Representative list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. First of all, the most noticeable point at first sight is that the nomination by North Korea took place after the nomination of South Korea was accepted. The following table gives a clarifying overview of the period in which the applications were prepared.

	Element	Start procedure	End procedure
South Korea	Arirang	31/03/2011	3~7/12/2012
North Korea	Arirang	31/03/2013	24~28/12/2014
South Korea	Kimjang	31/03/2012	2~7/12/2013
North Korea	Kimchi making	31/03/2014	30-11~04-12/2015

Table 1: An overview of the dates on which the nomination forms were sent in by the State Party and the date on which the decisions were made. Noteworthy to see that the North Korean nomination takes place in the following round of nominations soon after a positive decision is made about the South Korean element.

In this table we can see that the nomination forms of North Korea were sent in within the four months period from December in which the decisions took place, to March in which the nominations has to be sent in. The question arises whether this order in application is a coincidence. In the case of the two Koreas, even though they used to share a common history, we cannot assume that the content and the method by which cultural practices are exercised will be the same. The roots of these practices may lie in a shared history, however external factors and different lifestyles influence the perception and practice of a cultural element even within a country, so it is only natural that there

<sup>45</sup> Walraven, B. (2001), , Bardot soup and Confucians meat, food and Korean identity in global context..(pp.95-115), in Cwiertka, C. & Walraven, B. (ed.), *Asian Food: The Global and The Local*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press,(p.99)

will be differences in the way ' shared heritage' practices are exercised in North Korea and South Korea.

In order to have a better understanding of the perception of *kimjang* culture in both Koreas, and to seek for the different and overlapping points I decided to analyze the nomination forms of South Korea and North Korea. First of all, in both nomination forms it is said that virtually all Koreans are practitioners of *kimjang*. Knowing how to make *kimch'i* and sharing the know-how with younger generations is regarded as a task in families, in order to keep the familiar taste of *kimch'i* alive, in every stage of life. *Kimjang* skills are usually transmitted orally within the family from women to women. The most typical line of transmission is through the mothers-in-law to the daughters-in-law in patrilineal families. By sharing the *kimch'i* taste of the family with the daughter-in-law, the mother-in-law in a way welcomes the daughter-in-law and shares important information with her, what is heritage of the family but also cultural heritage of Koreans. This knowledge on *kimch'i* making is precious to the newly married daughter-in-laws, since they are supposed to eventually become a good mother and housewife.

Also, as a part of the education system, Koreans get involved in *kimjang* in an early stage of their lives. The transmission of *kimjang* knowledge is carried out within the official curriculum in schools. In elementary schools children learn about *kimjang* and also can make *kimch'i* together in class. A more elaborate *kimch'i* making practice takes place in high school. *Kimjang* is seen as a good opportunity to strengthen family cooperation and solidarity in a modern society. Making and sharing *kimch'i* reaffirms the Korean identity. While making *kimch'i* is a part of preparing food and thus considered as the role of women, we can still see men participating in *kimjang*. It is usually the task of men to wash large amounts of vegetables and dig holes into the ground to bury the *kimch'i* jars. For an optimal fermentation, it is important that the temperature is in balance, therefore from ancient times on , burying the *kimch'i* jars is chosen as the ideal method to store *kimch'i*.

It is also noted that the inscription of *kimjang* will help to enhance global awareness of the significance of indigenous knowledge. It will help in the process where people realize , respect and value knowledge and practices. In the case of South Korea, the government has plans for the near future to safeguard the *kimjang* culture and intensify *kimjang* related projects. First of all, participation of the younger generation in *kimjang* will be guaranteed, since it will become a part of the education system. In some schools, there are gardens where students can have firsthand experience in growing *kimch'i* ingredients and afterwards making *kimch'i* to be consumed together with other students in the school cafeteria during the meals. It is said that the number of public schools with these gardens will be increasing in the near future. The inscription would also help Koreans become aware of the importance of everyday practices as an integral part of their cultural heritage. They will have a broadened perspective on Intangible Cultural Heritage safeguarding. As for the legal side of the story, since Intangible cultural Heritage cannot be included in the national inventory, under the current cultural heritage protection act, without clearly representative practitioners such as *kimjang*, the cultural heritage administration had prepared the state inventory of intangible cultural heritage that includes *kimjang* along with 60 other items.



The Cultural Heritage Administration plans on pursuing separate legal provisions to safeguard intangible cultural heritage in particular. According to a survey held in November 2011, 95 percent of Koreans eat *kimch'i* at least once a day and about 64 percent eat it three times a day. As for participation in *kimjang*, more than 70 percent replied that they actively participate in *kimch'i* making with the family. *Kimjang* is also practiced as a part of charity activities. Big companies or groups of people hold *kimjang* events to help people who cannot participate in *kimch'i* making due to for example financial reasons. In regards of safeguarding methods used in Korea, it is said that every local governments supports annually 5 to 20 *kimjang* events where the budget is varying from US \$ 2000 to US \$100.000.

In order to promote the *kimjang* culture, various steps are being taken by the South Korean government. An example is the World *kimch'i* festival what is held in Kwangju, in October or November which are the best periods for *kimch'i* making. Another point mentioned was that for a more systematic and scientific analyses the World Institute of *Kimch'i* and the *Kimch'i* Research Institute were established. Furthermore, it is without doubt that this achievement will also play a role in the marketing process of *kimch'i* and even the Korean cuisine for international audiences.

Just like in the nomination form of South Korea, we can see that North Korea emphasizes the shared experience of knowledge. One noticeable difference between the application form of both countries is the answer given to the multiple choice questions asked on page 7 of the forms, where the applying country is asked to clarify which safeguarding measures have been taken and are currently being taken by the communities, groups or individuals concerned. All the 5 boxes are selected in the case of North Korea while South Korea did not select the options of revitalization & identification and documentation & research. Along with the nomination forms both countries also have prepared a short video file introducing the *kimch'i* making tradition in their country. The most noticeable point of these videos is that the South Korean video is in the format of a short documentary with a narrator sharing information about *kimjang*, while the North Korean version does not contain any spoken information but explains the *kimch'i* making culture with subtitles. The content of both videos focuses mainly on the practice of *kimch'i* making in the contemporary society and the participation of communities, groups and individuals in this practice. In North Korea, *kimch'i* making was placed on the state inventory on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2012, which is managed by the National Authority for the Protection of Cultural heritage (NAPCH). It was also noted that in North Korea, in order to encourage *kimch'i* making the Korean Cooks Association and the Democratic Women's Union of Korea sponsors *kimch'i* making. The law on protection of cultural heritage of the DPRK adopted in 2012 and is said to be supplemented on a regular basis.

The two countries or better said, the two Koreas, which shared the same history till division, applied to UNESCO to have *kimjang* ( although differently formulated) inscribed in the list of intangible cultural heritage. Like mentioned before the application of South Korea is already approved in 2013. When we compare the content of the application form of both countries we can see various points that differ from each other. One noticeable point is that while South Korea refers to the practice of *kimch'i* making as

*kimjang* and also emphasizes the importance of community and sharing, like it is also visible in the official name of the element, North Korea chooses a more descriptive name for the same practice of *kimch'i* making. After having done the necessary research on this, I was able to discover that the noun *kimjang*, referring to the practice of *kimch'i* making is also existing in the North Korean language. This makes way for the assumption that the usage of this noun is omitted deliberately in order to distinguish itself from South Korea's inscribed element, the *kimjang*. Other differences are visible in the way both countries try to safeguard the practice of *kimch'i* making.

As one may have expected, there were various overlapping points in these application forms. This was also visible in the nomination forms covering *Arirang*. However, noteworthy in the case of *Arirang* was that it was stated that the previous inscription ( by South Korea) did not cover the way in which *Arirang* was performed in North Korea. This way the nomination of the North Korean *Arirang* was introduced as having a complementary role. Remarkable was that a similar statement , referring to to previous inscription was not made in the nomination form of *kimch'i* making.

The result of the North Korean application will be announced during the 10<sup>th</sup> Committee (10.COM) in December 2015. Whether North Korea's application will be recognized by UNESCO and will be inscribed on the Representative List of Intangible cultural heritage of humanity will be clear when the final announcement will be made by the Convention. However, since UNESCO, just like in the case of *Karagöz* and *Arirang* showed its positive point of view on 'shared heritage' by two or more countries, and the nomination forms of South Korea and North Korea have overlapping content, it seems that there is a high possibility that the nomination of North Korea will be accepted by UNESCO. If the *kimch'i* making of North Korea will be inscribed in the Representative List this will be the second element for North Koreans to be proud of their officially recognized intangible cultural heritage of Humanity. It is the duty of the Committee to check on a professional level to what extend the nomination criteria is met for the element nominated by the North Korean State.

## **5. Intangible heritage policy in South Korea**

Korea is one of the many countries that has a rich history and is the source of many tangible and intangible heritage. For a long time, Korea had been a mainly agriculture society. Short after the Korean war, the industrialization started in the 1960's what resulted in a migration to cities in search for a job. Korea was for a long time known as the ' miracle of the Han River ', referring to the rapid growth of Korea's economy and industrialization that took place. This growth turned Korea in less than four decades into an well developed and wealthy country and contributed to the process of democratization and globalization. In the recent years, with the increasing success of the phenomenon called Korean wave overseas, Korea is not only seen as the miracle of the Han river but also as a country that has soft power. We can speak of soft power when a country manages to create an attractive country image, what will contribute to its positive image in international relations. The importance of soft power increases in the world, and culture is one of the significant instruments that contribute to the creation of

soft power. In the case of Korea we can see that the constant promotion of Korea and its culture in diverse aspects resulted in the fact that Korea is perceived as a country with a rich culture. Not only monumental heritage but also diverse cultural and traditional practices have been recognized as important heritage within Korea, but also are being recognized on an international level after their inscription on one of the heritage lists of UNESCO. Intangible heritage, especially after being officially recognized represents the significant aspects of a country's culture and tradition, what is also the case in Korea.

Korea has had systematic safeguarding measures for intangible cultural heritage for about 50 years, but the scope is different and limited from the 2003 convention. The Cultural Property Protection Law was announced on 10 January 1962 in order to provide the promotion and protection of tangible and intangible culture. Its aim was that while the Korean society and culture continuously would change, the traditional forms of Korean culture would be preserved and revitalized. This law formed the first attempt in Korea to encourage the protection of intangible heritage, especially related to performing arts.<sup>46</sup> The very first step in history to create a law for the protection of tangible and intangible properties was taken by Japan. Japan and Korea are known as the only two countries in the world that have their own systems that are established to protect national heritage. The Cultural Properties Committee, established in 1961, is subdivided into four subcommittees ; the intangible cultural properties committee, the tangible cultural properties committee, the monuments committee and the folk materials committee. Since this paper focuses mainly on intangible heritage I will only look at the role of the intangible cultural properties committee.

The intangible cultural properties under the Korean heritage system are divided into 7 subcategories. These categories are music, dance, drama, folk games, rites, martial arts, handicrafts and cuisine. The Cultural Heritage Administration of South Korea describes intangible heritage as "Intangible cultural products of great historic and artistic values, such as drama, music, dance and craftsmanship."<sup>47</sup> Each area has a representing member and they come together for a meeting only when it is needed. The intangible heritage committee has the duty to designate or cancel intangible heritage properties and their holders. This committee also has the right to authorize or control the designated performances or activities. Lastly the committee has as duty to investigate and research for potential designation of items an performances that can be seen as intangible heritage.<sup>48</sup> Korea's safeguarding system institutionalized in 1962 as was called the "Important intangible Cultural Heritage Designation System". The constitution of this system had an important role in the development of the concept of intangible heritage. The intangible cultural heritage system of Korea would safeguard valuable cultural practices in order to protect them from disappearing in the wave of modernization.

After an item is selected and acknowledged as important intangible cultural property,

<sup>46</sup> Yang, J.S.(2003) , *Cultural Protection Policy in Korea : Intangible Cultural Properties and Living National Treasures*, Korean studies Dissertation series no.3, United States: Jimoondang International , (p.33)

<sup>47</sup> Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea, "Heritage classification" , [http://english.cha.go.kr/english/search\\_plaza\\_new/state.jsp?mc=EN\\_03\\_01](http://english.cha.go.kr/english/search_plaza_new/state.jsp?mc=EN_03_01)

<sup>48</sup> Yang, J.S.(2003) , *Cultural Protection Policy in Korea : Intangible Cultural Properties and Living National Treasures*, Korean studies Dissertation series no.3, United States: Jimoondang International, (pp.38-39)

performers of that practice are selected and designated as performers and protectors of it. These performers usually get the title of '*poyuja*', meaning holders.

Since intangible heritage mainly consists of knowledge, skills or techniques about a certain cultural practice, the person that is the most knowledgeable and skilled person is regarded as the person who should transmit this knowledge to others. Therefore these performers that are designated also get the title of "Living Human Treasures". One interesting point here is that the living human treasure (*in'ganmunhwajae*) must be at least fifty-five years old, what comes from the belief that one has had sufficient performance experience by that age.<sup>49</sup> However, when a holder of an important intangible cultural property dies, the designation of the holder is regarded as cancelled. In such a case the designated item can be cancelled too, if there is no designated successor and the item cannot be performed anymore.

The main idea of safeguarding heritage is to protect and manage cultural properties and revive them as living cultures in order to keep them alive as close to the original form as possible. I have already mentioned that it is the task of people to pay respect to the intangible cultural heritage of their country and to contribute to the safeguarding of it. Protecting and making it possible for intangible heritage to be kept alive, the transmission of knowledge and skills to younger generations is an important part of the safeguarding system of intangible heritage. The intangible heritage system of Korea is highly refined and structured. The living human treasures are required to transmit their skills and knowledge to younger person in the form of trainings. These training courses are free of charge for the participators and the government gives the Living Human Treasures monthly around US \$850. Additional to this, other special privileges and free medical treatment is provided in order to elevate the prestige of the Living Human Treasures.<sup>50</sup> Stipends are not only given to the treasure 'holders' but various amounts were also set for 'future holders', assistants and students. In return for these services the treasure holders have various obligations. These are for example participating during festivals, transmitting the cultural property to the next generation and holding public performances. If the treasure holders who are responsible for this neglect their duty their title as holder can be cancelled followed by a fine the treasure holder has to pay.

In 1999 The Korean system dealing with Living Human treasurers was reformed with revisions in expansion, insurance of preservation what resulted allowing more than one 'holder' to be acknowledged in each Asset.<sup>51</sup> According to a report prepared in September 2015, there are 134 elements inscribed on the list of important intangible cultural properties of Korea. This list also contains the names of the main treasure holders per element.

<sup>49</sup> Idem.,(pp. 40-41)

<sup>50</sup> Yim, D.J, (2004), "Living Human treasurers and the protection of intangible cultural Heritage : Experiences and Challenges",  
[http://icom.museum/fileadmin/user\\_upload/pdf/ICOM\\_News/2004-4/ENG/p10\\_2004-4.pdf](http://icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/ICOM_News/2004-4/ENG/p10_2004-4.pdf)

<sup>51</sup> 'Howard, K., " Living Human Tresures' from a lost age: current issues in cultural heritage management, SOAS, University of London, [http://congress.aks.ac.kr/korean/files/2\\_1358750273.pdf](http://congress.aks.ac.kr/korean/files/2_1358750273.pdf)

Noteworthy is that the last element added to this list in September 2015 was *Arirang* and that *kimjang* is not recorded ( yet) on this list.<sup>52</sup> When this system is analyzed the question arises what the main objectives are for nominating elements for the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity ? First of all, the main reason is said to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage. Another important point is to ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage by the communities, groups and individuals concerned. Furthermore, as a result of the inscription there will be a raise of awareness at local, national and international level about the importance of intangible cultural heritage. It is also regarded as a matter of course that the inscription will provide international cooperation and assistance in safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage.<sup>53</sup> It is therefore the task of communities, groups and individuals to take the necessary steps in order to keep a certain traditional practice that is regarded as intangible heritage alive. I already mentioned that the increasing success of the Korean wave, contributed to the country image of Korea and indirectly also to the nation branding process that takes place. As a result of this we can see for example see in the publications of the Korean Culture and Information Service that the Korean culture is subdivided into categories such as K-food, K- movie, K-drama, K- Art along with other categories.

### 5.1 The value of heritage and the effect of ‘intangiblization’ on heritage

Value of an element determines whether it should be conserved or not. It has also been the underlying reason for heritage conservation. However, when we talk about value, we must not forget that not only tangible heritage but also intangible heritage has significant value. There is no standard approach when we talk about the value of heritage. However, there are three approaches that are used frequently. These are the value derived from individual perceptions, value derived from social interaction and the intrinsic value of heritage. It is also said that the consumption of heritage is a shared social experience. This results in that as more individuals consume or use heritage goods, the collective benefit of these goods contributing to the common heritage value in a community will be greater .<sup>54</sup>

Heritage lists such as UNESCO’s fuse aesthetic, ethical and administrative concerns in a rather unique fashion where heritage and heritage lists are both depending on selection while they decontextualize and recontextualize their objects to fit in among the other elements . Also the main concern of member states of UNESCO is the way the outstanding value of heritage would be determined. The underlying reason for this

<sup>52</sup> 문화재청, 중요무형문화재 전승자 현황 2015, 30-9-2015, [http://www.cha.go.kr/cop/bbs/selectBoardArticle.do;jsessionid=xolxLWTjWfugG48Ifukwj4rjGB1oz2qekmpWqpHj7lg2gUeOrjTjXlKfQdavn1m?nttid=27690&bbsId=BBSMSTR\\_1045&pageIndex=1&pageUnit=10&searchCnd=&searchWrd=&ctgryLrcls=&ctgryMdcls=&ctgrySmcls=&ntcStartDt=&ntcEndDt=&searchUseYn=&mn=NS\\_03\\_08\\_01](http://www.cha.go.kr/cop/bbs/selectBoardArticle.do;jsessionid=xolxLWTjWfugG48Ifukwj4rjGB1oz2qekmpWqpHj7lg2gUeOrjTjXlKfQdavn1m?nttid=27690&bbsId=BBSMSTR_1045&pageIndex=1&pageUnit=10&searchCnd=&searchWrd=&ctgryLrcls=&ctgryMdcls=&ctgrySmcls=&ntcStartDt=&ntcEndDt=&searchUseYn=&mn=NS_03_08_01)

<sup>53</sup> Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea, Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, [http://english.cha.go.kr/english/world\\_heritage\\_new/world\\_intangible\\_03.jsp?mc=EN\\_04\\_02](http://english.cha.go.kr/english/world_heritage_new/world_intangible_03.jsp?mc=EN_04_02)

<sup>54</sup> The Allen consulting Group, “Valuing the priceless, the value of historic heritage in Australia” <https://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/info/pubs/valuing-priceless.pdf>, (pp. iv-v, 9)

concern was that the process by which the value of heritage would be determined may lead to competition rather than cooperation what could result in endangering intangible heritage that really requires attention for safeguarding.<sup>55</sup>

The criteria that UNESCO has set up in order to determine whether an element that is nominated should be inscribed in one of its lists is rather forming an obstacle for the potential exploration and recognition of valuable intangible heritage. The five criteria that an element has to meet in order to be recognized as intangible heritage is forming a so called framework in which the diverse heritage from all around the world has to fit in, in order to be recognized as valuable on international level. One negative effects this may result in is that countries may modify and add , even make up things related to the to-be-nominated element in order to be fulfilling the requested criteria. Not only in Korea but also in other countries there are various practices that are considered to be an important part of the culture. However, just because they cannot fit into the frame of criteria set by UNESCO this should not lead to a decrease in value.

This idea can be applied to the case of Korea where the nomination of the Royal Cuisine of Chosŏn could not meet all the required criteria and could not be inscribed in the Representative List of intangible heritage. The Royal Cuisine that has its roots in the Chosŏn dynasty, may not play a significant role in the daily lives of people in every level of the society, but it is one of the aspects of the Korean culture that represents the rich food culture of Korea what Koreans are proud of. The royal court cuisine did not attract much attention till the 1990's. However in the period what followed , with the contribution of globalization and the growth of the middle class court cuisine became of the elements that was reconstructed in the globalizing process of Korean food. Furthermore, the popularity of the drama series *Daejanggeum* ( Jewel in the palace ) contributed to the popularity of the royal court cuisine. The court cuisine was not recognized as intangible heritage by the system of UNESCO, but it continues to interest people who are seeking differentiation, exclusivity and traces of national identity in postmodern Korea.<sup>56</sup>

Not only in the case of Korea, but also in other cases the UNESCO heritage lists are usually used for tourism. This has been mostly the case with the elements and places inscribed in the World Heritage List, where these places were visited by curious tourists. It has been noted in various sources that this is not and should not be the purpose of the lists, however on the other hand, it is universally acknowledged that the underlying motive for inscription is directly linked to this. The idea behind this is that with the inscription on the heritage list, the amount of tourists will increase and giving a boost to local economies what will result in the growth and survival of these places. This has been usually the case with world heritage, but nowadays also intangible heritage is attracting many tourists. Barbara Kirschenblatt- Gimblett focused on this phenomenon in one of her works where heritage and tourism are regarded as collaborative industries. She also suggested that heritage converts locations into destinations and tourism making

<sup>55</sup> Hafstein, V.T., Intangible heritage as a list, from masterpieces to representation, in Smith, L. & Akagawa, N. ed. (2009), *Intangible Heritage*, New York: Routledge, (pp.93-111)

<sup>56</sup> Kim, K.O. (2015), *Re-Orienting cuisine : East Asian Foodways in the Twenty-First century*, (Food, nutrition and Culture, Vol.3), New York: Berghahn Books, (pp. 25-26)

them economically viable as exhibits of themselves.<sup>57</sup> One thing that is clearly visible is that UNESCO's lists are seen as a prestigious way to gain attention and resources for certain practices, selected through a procedure by which the fulfillment of five criteria are questioned, which are set up by a Western authority, while the majority of heritage is found in other parts of the world.

For most people heritage carries two meanings. First of all, its association with tourism and places with historical interest. On the other hand, it is seen as a way to describe shared values and collective memories of a nation.<sup>58</sup> In the case of *kimch'i* and *kimjang*, we may see this phenomenon resulting in an increase in visitors to the *Kimch'i* Museum or attending *kimchi* festivals or *kimjang* sessions. It is also possible that the number of *kimch'i* museums or *kimch'i* theme parks may increase throughout the country. A similar case we can refer to, even though it has been closed now, was the success of the *Daejanggeum* Theme park. After its success as a drama series not only for Koreans but also for Asian tourists this theme park was one of the places tourists would visit. With the diffusion of the Korean wave its popularity had also reached other continents in the world.

On macroeconomic scale, we can speak of the existence of the so called *Kimchi wars*, referring to the replacement of Korean *kimch'i* by the cheaper made in China *kimchi*. On the one hand, it is cheaper and mass produced. The taste is slightly different, but was still acceptable, when one takes the convenience in account. However, when we look at the overall picture of the so called second *Kimch'i wars*, we can speak of a contradiction between theoretical and practical way of perception on this issue by South Koreans. The first *Kimch'i* war was with Japan, what in theory ended by the decision of the Codex Alimentarius Commission that declared Korea the suzerain state of *kimch'i*, what draw a clear line between Korean *kimch'i* and the *kimuchi*, referred to as the Japanese imitation of *kimch'i*. However, with the success of *kimuchi* in Japan, *kimch'i* and *kimuchi* came to mean different things in the mid-1990s. The second *Kimch'i* War started in 2005 with China, when the Korean Food and Drug Administration had found parasite eggs in nine of the sixteen samples of Chinese *kimch'i*. This resulted in the fact that Chinese *kimch'i* imports were banned for a short period. The start of the *Kimch'i* war took place when the national assemblywoman Kyeong-Hwa Ko emphasized food safety in her career and also focused on the *kimch'i* imports from china.<sup>59</sup> The *Kimch'i* war was quite fierce in the begin stage, but with the counteractions of China it ended in a hushed up way. What remained from this *kimch'i* war was mainly the burden put on the shoulders of Korean women who had abandoned the practice of *kimjang* in their modern lifestyles.

Until the emergence of the second *Kimchi* war and the focus on this by media, accompanied by the 'intangiblization' of *kimch'i* as a dish boosting Korean national pride,

<sup>57</sup> Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B. (1998), *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums and Heritage*, Berkeley: University of California Press, (p. 151)

<sup>58</sup> Bendix, R., *Heritage between economy and politics: An assessment from the perspective of cultural anthropology* in Smith, L. & Akagawa, N. ed. (2009), *Intangible Heritage*, New York : Routledge, (p.253)

<sup>59</sup> Han, K.K, *The kimchi wars in globalizing East Asia*, in Cwiertka, K.J. ed. (2013), *Critical Readings on Food in East Asia, volume 1*, Leiden: Brill, (pp.392-393)

the consumption of *kimch'i* made in China was not an big issue. In theory the import and consumption of *kimch'i* from China may be considered as an insult for the Korean *kimch'i* in the perception of South Koreans, however in practice the mass produced *kimch'i* from China is cheaper and easily served in restaurants . Some companies even stopped their own production and are selling *kimch'i* imported from China under their own names. This does not mean that Korean made *kimch'i* does not exist. Korean *kimch'i* manufactured by large Korean companies does exist, however is rather expensive. The most famous brand is known as Chonggajip. This brand is usually among the few Korean brands of *kimch'i* that is usually exported to other countries. It is also said that is has become a trend among tourists to buy luxurious *kimch'i* from five star hotels.

With these *Kimch'i* wars that took place, one can clearly see the struggle of Korea with *kimch'i* representing its national pride, in the globalizing world. The authenticity of *kimch'i* is regarded as important, however with the globalizing Korean society and modernizing lifestyles, it is becoming harder to find the homemade *kimch'i* by mothers. The 'intangiblization' of *kimjang* culture may have put once again emphasis on the nations pride *kimch'i* and *kimjang* culture, but it is the question whether in the globalizing world and Korea, the authenticity of *kimch'i* plays an important role in the busy lives of people.

## 6. Conclusion

In the recent years various inscriptions of food practices as intangible cultural heritage were visible in the Representative List of UNESCO. Therefore, the inscription of *kimjang* as a food practice in the Representative list as intangible heritage is not an unique case. The uniqueness of the case the Korean *kimjang* and *kimch'i* is that both South Korea and North Korea nominated the practice of *kimch'i* making as their intangible heritage. This paper dealt with the intangible cultural heritage system with the main focus on the case of Korea where the *kimjang* culture was acknowledged and recognized by UNESCO as intangible heritage of South Korea. Short after this inscription North Korea also took a similar initiative and nominated the practice of *kimch'i* making as their intangible heritage.

As the South Korean economy developed, Korea's view of *kimch'i* changed gradually becoming more positive just like it was the case with their self-image. Various attempts in globalizing Korean cultural elements, and *kimch'i* representing the Korean cuisine but also being a metaphor for the energy of Koreans resulted in the fact that *kimch'i* became the symbolic dish of Korea. With its international recognition as being a Korean dish, it has become an export product to many countries. Various marketing strategies are utilized not only for *kimch'i* but also other Korean food products, in match with the specific market and country it is exported to. With the continuous promotion of Korea and its culture Korea was able to create a positive country image. The increasing popularity of Korean wave related content, contributed to the formation of this country image not only in the rest of Asia but also other parts of the world. This way culture in its various aspects has become one of the tools that contribute to nation branding and the



creation of soft power. Korean food, sometimes referred to as K-food is one of the aspects of the Korean culture that is promoted. With the inscription of *kimjang* as intangible heritage it looks like the status of *kimch'i* has risen from a stinky and rather cheap dish into an almost healthy and enshrined dish what Koreans are proud of and other countries should envy.

Intangible heritage is a significant part of the intangible wealth of a country. However, there should be clear distinction between meeting the certain criteria and being recognized as intangible heritage, and continuously safeguarding intangible heritage in all levels of the society. With the changing times and lifestyles in the modern age we live in, the majority of traditions are in danger of disappearing if the necessary measures are not taken that are significant for preserving these traditional practices. In the case of *kimjang* we have seen that *kimjang* is still practiced in the Korean society, even though it is less often practiced compared to the past decades. The amount of *kimch'i* prepared has also decreased since it has become more convenient for women to buy *kimch'i* or partly processed ingredients. With this change in lifestyle and the noticeable traces of westernization in dietary, the consumption of *kimch'i* has decreased. However, since *kimch'i* is the main side dish for Koreans and is known for its benefits for one's health, it is claimed that it is out of question that the consumption of *kimch'i* will ever disappear. It was also noticed, ironically enough, that while *kimch'i* and *kimjang* are regarded as unique elements of the Korean culture, the consumption of *kimch'i* that is served in restaurants and schools is mainly imported *kimch'i* from China.

As a final point in this paper I would like to focus on the North Korean nomination of *kimch'i* making once again. The 10<sup>th</sup> Committee of UNESCO where the North Korean nomination of *kimch'i* making was examined took place in the same period as the deadline I had for this paper. Therefore I am glad to be able to include the result of the nomination in my paper. Earlier in this paper I analyzed the nomination forms of both South Korea and North Korea and mentioned that the majority of the content was referring to the same, only in different vocabulary and also that with the focus of UNESCO on shared heritage there was a high chance that the status of intangible heritage for the North Korean style of *kimch'i* making would be granted. The examination of the nominated elements took place on 1 December 2015 and North Korea's "Tradition of *Kimch'i*- making in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea" met all the required criteria for inscription in the Representative list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The same day, the tugging rituals and games that South Korea had nominated became the 18<sup>th</sup> intangible cultural heritage of South Korea. Needless to say, this inscription received more attention in news. Noticeable was that the focus on the inscription of '*kimch'i* making' by North Korea was rather minimum with the emphasis in almost every news source on the fact that South Korea already had inscribed this element under the official name *kimjang* earlier in the Representative List of intangible heritage and that the inscription of *kimjang* has become the second shared heritage between the two Koreas. While the North Korean inscription was announced in South Korean sources, it was noticeable that no traces of news were found (yet) in the North Korean news sources that are accessible.

The significant point here is, that we can speak of rather a competition-like case instead of truly shared heritage. Also, after having analyzed both nominated I discovered that there were many overlapping parts. This case may become an example to other countries to nominate significant dishes and food practices as their intangible heritage to UNESCO. However, as is noted with the case of North Korea and its inscription the assumption may be created one can apply to UNESCO with the dish that is shared with another country, even though this food practices be both too similar to even distinguish.

After having analyzed these two inscriptions, with the inscription of *Arirang* in mind the question arises whether we will be able to see other cases of shared heritage between the two Koreas. At the moment, North Korea has with the inscription of *kimch'i* making two elements in the Representative List as their intangible heritage and a pending nomination for 2016 with the element called *ssirŭm* wrestling. The previous two inscriptions were both previously nominated by South Korea. However, *ssirŭm* wrestling is not yet nominated by the South Korean. It would be interesting to see whether a 'counter attack' nomination of this element will take place by South Korea. An increasing amount of shared heritage, but also the order of nomination can make way for assumptions of competition in intangible cultural heritage between countries, what would be interesting to research. In case that in the near future other food practices will be inscribed under the name of South Korea or North Korea as intangible heritage, a detailed analyses of these cases will help to understand the position of these food practices in the Korean society, in link to the earlier inscribed elements, but also to what extend food practices are considered as intangible heritage in society.

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