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<CN>Chapter 6

<CT>Broadening the Scope of Heritage

<CST>The Concept of Cultural Environment and Scalar Relations in Finnish Cultural Environment Policy

<CA>Satu Kähkönen and Tuuli Lähdesmäki

<FL>There has been a growing trend of strengthening the role of cultural heritage values in environmental discussions, policies and management plans in Europe. These discussions, policies and plans have traditionally been dominated by ecological and economic perspectives, but recently more holistic approaches have been developed by international, national and regional actors in order to respond to the scope and complexity of heritage management and environmental issues. At the European level, attempts at a more holistic approach to the environment and its cultural heritage values have been put forward in several conventions and policy strategies, such as the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (commonly referred to as the Faro Convention, 2005) and the European Commission's heritage policy 'Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe' (2014). The policy discourse of these European actors emphasizes 'an enlarged and cross-disciplinary concept of cultural heritage' and 'the value and potential of cultural heritage wisely used as a resource for sustainable development and quality of life in a constantly evolving

society’, as the Faro Convention puts it (CofE 2005: 1). A key idea in these holistic approaches is to encourage the collaboration of diverse stakeholders to promote ‘sustainable growth and employment’ and ‘innovative forms of community-oriented management’ that are perceived to improve the economic and social potential of areas – particularly in rural and remote regions (EC 2014: 6).

In Europe, the integrated approach to heritage has been followed and applied in national and regional policies and management plans, in which environmental aspects and cultural heritage values are often connected to broader questions of sustainability, development, biodiversity, livelihood and well-being of regions. Differences in academic, administrative and institutional settings have, however, brought about many different but parallel conceptualizations of cultural heritage values in a broader environmental and societal context and introduced various policy models, initiatives and collaborative activities to deal with these values. Since the adoption of the European Landscape Convention in 2000, the concept of landscape has often been promoted as a useful holistic frame to organize cooperation and to understand, protect and promote natural and cultural heritage. For example, UNESCO launched its Urban Historic Landscape (HUL) approach in 2011.

In the Nordic countries, an expanded and cross-disciplinary context of heritage has been discussed and rationalized with the concept of cultural environment. The idea of cultural environment was selected as an administrative concept in Nordic countries in the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. The concept’s selection was influenced by the topical discussions of sustainable development, and it was seen as a neutral and fitting concept to help to promote integrating built heritage protection into the other administrative sectors, especially strengthening preservationist points of view in land use planning. This conceptual innovation has particularly

established its position in Swedish and Finnish heritage policy and management discourses. In Finland, the focus of the concept has mainly been on regions, but its regional emphasis is in various ways connected to international environment and heritage policy discourses.

Cultural environment is a conceptual innovation that merges and penetrates several scalar categories. The concept broadens the focus of the concept of heritage by drawing together cultural heritage values, environment and their capacity to function as an economic, social and cultural resource for the region. Cultural environment policies are typically structured as top-down but with a strong emphasis on engaging bottom-up views and actions in the preparation and implementation of the policies. These policies are based on broad inter-sectoral collaboration by experts from different policy sectors. In the cultural environment policies the interests, key themes and vocabulary of the regional, national, European and international heritage and environmental discourses intersect.

This chapter discusses the emergence of the concept of cultural environment and explores how cultural environment has become an issue in heritage policy and what role scale plays in this policy. The chapter focuses on a genealogy of the concept in the Nordic countries in general, and particularly in Finland, from the point of view of politics of scale. First, we examine the semantic meanings of the concept and how it broadens the notion of heritage into a cross-disciplinary and inter-sectorial category. Secondly, we explore cultural environment administration and the interaction and power relations in its scalar structure. Our discussion focuses particularly on the relationality of ‘the regional’ and its connections to the other scales – the local, national and European/EU – in the cultural environment policy discourse and administration. We claim that cultural environment is a conceptual tool for negotiating broader meanings of the region and ‘the

regional', such as competitiveness of the region, and, thus, it has a crucial role in the politics of scale in current heritage policy discourse.

Our research material consists of heritage legislation and governmental heritage policy documents from Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark and cultural environment programmes produced in different Finnish regions between 1995 and 2013. Between these years, altogether nineteen Finnish regional cultural environment programmes were created. The material was examined by the method of close reading (Brummet 2010) with a focus on textual analysis of the semantic contexts, meanings and uses of the concept of cultural environment. The analysis focused particularly on scalar relations that the concept and its use entail in the research material.

The chapter proceeds from the discussion of the emergence and development of the concept of cultural environment to exploration of the concept's semantics in Nordic heritage legislation and policy discourse. This discussion is deepened by close reading of the contents of regional cultural environment programmes produced in Finland. We end with a discussion of scalar relations in Finnish cultural environment policy and conclusions on the politics of scale included in the concept.

<A>From Cultural Landscape to Cultural Environment

<FL>The roots of the concept of cultural environment can be traced to the discourse on cultural landscape. These two concepts have many points of resemblance in administrative use and in many ways they overlap. However, in contrast to cultural environment, the concept of cultural landscape has a long tradition in academic use. Cultural landscape (*Kulturlandschaft*) is one of the classical concepts of geography, first used by German geographers such as Carl Ritter in 1832, Carl Vogel in 1851, Joseph Wimmer in 1882 and Friedrich Ratzel in 1893 (Potthoff 2013).

The use of the concept in nineteenth-century German academic discussion includes different notions of the concept, ranging from perceiving cultural landscapes as developed from natural landscapes – and, thus, opposing nature and culture – to an understanding of cultural landscape as agricultural or park landscape (Potthoff 2013). In nineteenth-century German discussion in general, the concept of cultural landscape refers to a landscape modified by human influence. In the early twentieth century, the concept found its way to English-speaking academia as well as to geographers and ethnologists in the Nordic countries. From the 1960s onwards, other disciplines increasingly adopted the concept, and it entered the terminology of environmental management, becoming a part of agricultural politics, nature protection and cultural heritage management (Jones 2003; Jones and Daugstad 1997).

In the 1990s, several international actors adopted the concept of cultural landscape as a conservation category (Jones 2003: 21). UNESCO's World Heritage Committee agreed in 1992 on revised operational guidelines specifying that cultural landscapes could be protected in accordance with the 1972 World Heritage Convention (UNESCO 1992). In 1996, the operational guidelines were expanded to describe how cultural landscapes fall into three main categories: 'clearly defined landscapes designed and created intentionally by man'; 'organically evolved landscapes'; and 'associative cultural landscapes' that include 'powerful religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural element rather than material cultural evidence' (UNESCO 1996: 11). In 1995, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a Recommendation on the Integrated Conservation of Cultural Landscape Areas as Part of Landscape Policies (CofE 1995). In this recommendation, a cultural landscape area is defined as:

<EXT>specific topographically delimited parts of the landscape, formed by various combinations of human and natural agencies, which illustrate the evolution of human society, its settlement and character in time and space and which have acquired socially and culturally recognised values at various territorial levels, because of the presence of physical remains reflecting past land use and activities, skills or distinctive traditions, or depiction in literary and artistic works, or the fact that historic events took place there. (CofE 1995: 2)

Despite the differences, administrative use of the concept of cultural landscape can be seen as a useful immediate point of reference when analysing the emergence of the concept of cultural environment. In fact, the concept of cultural environment has been sometimes used as a synonym for cultural landscape. The concept of cultural environment was introduced in European policy discourse by the Council of Europe in 1996 in its Fourth European Conference of Ministers responsible for Cultural Heritage. The Helsinki Declaration on the Political Dimension of Cultural Heritage Conservation in Europe stated: ‘Contact with the cultural heritage allows individuals to locate themselves in their own historical, social and cultural environment. This applies to the cultural heritage in its widest sense, including the cultural landscape, the movable and the intangible heritage, as well as the architectural and archaeological heritage’ (sited in Pickard 2005: 81). The concept is also referred to – but not further explained or defined – in article eight of the Faro Convention (CofE 2005) that deals with ‘environment, heritage and quality of life’.

The appearance, adoption and varying use of the concept of cultural landscape, as well as the conceptual innovation of cultural environment, reflect particular ideological and political

agendas and power interests. Examination of the concept of cultural environment and cultural environment programmes reveals the challenges in finding new means for governing cultural heritage in a situation where heritage is no longer seen as buildings and sites in need of preservation nor as landscapes whose values are expected to be recognized and fostered, but rather as dynamic resources enhancing a sustainable future in diverse social and societal sectors. Besides the broader understanding of heritage, the concept of cultural environment reflects the emphasis of recent heritage policy discourses on broader participation and deeper involvement of communities and civil society in the diverse processes of heritagization. With the new concept, policymakers have sought to respond to the current pressure to decentralize control over defining and managing heritage.

<A>Scalar Semantics of the Concept of Cultural Environment in the Nordic Countries

<FL>Before the concept of cultural environment was introduced in European heritage policy discourse, it emerged in Nordic heritage administration and legislation. Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland adopted the concept of cultural environment into their heritage and environmental policies around the turn of the 1990s. Although all four countries have used the concept in their administration vocabulary, its meaning, usage or administrative role is not uniform.

In Sweden, the concept (*kulturmiljö*) was added to heritage legislation in 1988, when previously separate laws on archaeological and built heritage and some special provisions for older cultural heritage were merged into a single law (Kulturminneslag 1988). The concept was brought up in an introductory chapter of the law as an overarching concept, stating that protection and care of the cultural environment is a national concern and that responsibility for

the cultural environment belongs to everyone (Kulturminneslag 1988: 1 §). In Norway, the concept of cultural environment (*kulturmiljø*) was added to the cultural heritage law in 1992 but in a more limited sense. It was defined as ‘areas where cultural heritage is a part of a large entity or context’ (Kulturminneloven 1992: 2 §, translation SK).

In Denmark and Finland, the concept was not first introduced in a legislative context. In Denmark, the concept was launched as a part of environmental policy by the Ministry of the Environment in 1994 (Kristiansen 2003). However, its role and use in heritage discussions has declined (Guldberg 2002, 2007). In Finland, the concept of cultural environment (*kulttuuriympäristö*) was taken into active use in environmental and cultural heritage administration in the mid 1990s, when the first cultural environment programmes were launched as tools for cooperation between heritage actors, various administrative sectors and other stakeholders to enhance integration of heritage values into regional and municipal development and planning practices. In the Finnish environment and heritage administration, the concept of cultural environment was selected as the core of the programmes in order to combine the strategic discussion and management of built heritage, cultural landscape and archaeological heritage under the same conceptual frame.

Today in Finland and Sweden the concept of cultural environment is one of the key concepts in national and regional heritage administration. In Sweden, the Cultural Memory Law (Kulturminneslag 1988) was renamed as the Cultural Environment Law (*Kulturmiljölag*) in 2014. At the end of the same year, the Finnish government launched its first national Cultural Environment Strategy. This strategy starts by defining the concept as follows:

<EXT>In this strategy, cultural environment refers to a whole formed by human activity, an interaction between humans and the natural environment that includes different kinds of elements of different ages – the everyday human environment. Some parts of it have been defined as targets for protection or otherwise particularly important objects of value. The cultural environment also includes the intangible. (Cultural Environment Strategy 2014–2020 2014: 8)

In Finland, the concept of cultural environment has recently replaced the concept of built heritage in its diverse previous uses (Kähkönen 2015). For example, the European Heritage Days – the annually organized and locally led joint initiative between the Council of Europe and the EU – was called in Finnish ‘European Built Heritage Days’ (*Euroopan rakennusperintöpäivät*) until 2014, when the name was changed to ‘European Cultural Environment Days’ (*Euroopan kulttuuriympäristöpäivät*). Similarly, the web portal Rakennusperintö.fi – a portal on built heritage in Finland sustained by the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Education and Culture and the National Board of Antiquities (NBA) – changed its name in 2014 to Kulttuuriympäristömme.fi – ‘our cultural environment’. ‘Cultural environment’ is today a core concept in both heritage administration and communication of the NBA. According to the NBA, ‘[t]he cultural environment consists of relics, the cultivated environment, scenery and traditional biotopes’ (Museovirasto 2015), and it uses the concept to draw together preservation, conservation, development, management and legislation in this broad field.

The use of the concept of cultural environment in Nordic legislative and governmental discourse gives its administration a national dimension. The cultural environment is nationally governed through legislation and governmental strategies, although its more specific

management is downscaled (see Lähdesmäki, Zhu and Thomas and Zhu in this volume) to regional and local actors. In addition, the semantics of the concept in the administrative discourse downscales its meaning: the discourse emphasizes the proximity of cultural environments to their inhabitants and promotes subsidiarity in their protection and care. The administrative discourse on cultural environment is about politics of scale in action: it seeks to bring heritage as a broad spatial and environmental entity closer to people – both discursively and in administrative practices. Thus, the concept functions as a downscaling tool.

Finland offers an interesting case for closer analysis of politics of scale in cultural environment administration as the national-level policy discourse is put into practice in regional cultural environment programmes produced in different parts of the country. In these programmes the concept is regionalized and concretized while it is affixed to certain physical locations.

The Finnish regional cultural environment programmes commonly start by discussing and defining the concept. The definitions commonly consist of two parts: firstly, a cultural environment is defined as an environment created or influenced by human activity. Secondly, a cultural environment is stated as being comprised of a built heritage, cultural landscapes and archaeological sites. The first part of the definition resembles geography's classical definition of cultural landscape (*Kulturlandschaft*): landscape as areas modified by man, as opposed to natural landscape. The second part brings to the fore tangible heritage categories commonly referred to in traditional heritage discourses. In the broadest sense, the cultural environment is seen in the programmes as covering all environments where one can perceive the actions or effects of humans. This broad understanding of the concept includes all kinds of living environments, such as cities, towns, villages, environments related to livelihoods (agricultural and industrial) and

recreational environments (summer settlements, gardens and nature reserves). The programmes commonly point out that the cultural environment is not separated from the everyday living environment. At the same time, the programmes refer to the cultural environment as a primarily endangered environment – as areas or sites with cultural historical values needing care and protection. However, the programmes avoid the word ‘protection’. The risks that they suggest threaten the cultural environment include lack of resources, know-how and appreciation; the end of their original use; climate change; new needs for environments; and a zeal for reform.

The programmes commonly perceive the cultural environment as a spatial unit that has particular cultural historical meanings and a recognized value based upon it. The programmes are about negotiation on what these cultural historical values are and which parts of the environment are perceived as needing special attention or care. In most of the programmes, the focus is on environments whose cultural historical values have already been recognized by previous heritage actors. However, the programmes’ contents have been complemented as inventories, and research on new areas has been implemented. For example, modern architecture and suburban areas and their cultural values have been added to recent cultural environment programmes.

Although the concept of cultural environment is used to approach heritage as a cross-disciplinary field, the semantic context of the concept draws from attempts to broaden the policy discussion on built heritage. Through the concept, the programmes seek to expand preservation of the built heritage from separate architectural monuments to broader spatial units and, thus, strengthen the preservationist point of view in planning of land use and construction in both urban and rural areas. Although the concept is explained as covering cultural landscapes, the notion of landscape itself in the programmes mainly refers to a traditional agricultural landscape and, thus, locates the idea of a landscape into rural areas. Although the cultural environment

programmes seek to bring together built heritage and cultural landscapes in regional heritage policies and administration plans, the distinction between these two categories still determines the contents of the programmes (Kähkönen 2015).

<A>Networked Nature of Scale and Multidirectional Power Relations in Regional Cultural Environment Programmes

<FL>The Finnish regional cultural environment programmes do not only reflect and concretize national-level administration discourse. The programmes include and circulate various international heritage policy discourses whose timely themes, focuses and vocabulary (seek to) make the programmes convincing – and appealing. The programmes manifest the networked nature of scale in heritage policy. In them, various scalar discourses are linked, producing a networked and multi-scalar interaction of discourses.

Moreover, the programmes manifest multidirectional power relations. Heritage discourses and their new concepts do not only move top-down from international to national and from national to regional and local levels but may first emerge, for example, at the national level, as the discussion in the previous section indicates. Neither do heritage policy actors form a top-down hierarchy of power relations. In the case of Finnish cultural environment programmes, regional-level actors do not only implement the policies created at the national level but also develop it by interpreting and concretizing the policy discourse and its core concepts from the regional point of view while putting the policy into practice. Indeed, regional- and local-level actors use their performative power by defining what the concept of cultural environment means in practice and how its care should be managed. The adaption of international heritage policy

discourses to regional programmes is a part of this performative power practised by regional actors.

The close reading of Finnish regional cultural environment programmes brought out how their rhetoric is influenced by various international heritage and environmental agreements and strategies and their current policy discourses. Next, we discuss five of these discourses that are most commonly repeated in our research material. The core theme in recent international heritage and environmental policy discourses is to emphasize *cultural heritage as a resource*, as heritage is framed, for example, in the Faro Convention and the European Commission's heritage policy 'Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe'. In Finnish regional cultural environment programmes, heritage is also commonly explained as a valuable resource for local and regional communities and for society at large. Heritage is understood as cultural and social capital that enables economic and social well-being in the region.

One of the key goals in Finnish regional cultural environment programmes is to recognize and bring forward the uniqueness of regional or local cultural heritage and promote them as supporters of regional and local identities. This discourse that focuses on *promoting 'the regional'* reflects the broader regional emphasis of EU policy discourses. In European politics, the idea of 'Europe of the Regions' was brought to the fore in the 1980s and early 1990s as a response to emerging European integration (Elias 2008). The EU's new regional emphasis and regional funding instruments opened up new possibilities to elaborate regions in Europe in economic, social and cultural terms and to rethink their identities. In the early cultural environment programmes, the concept of cultural environment was mainly used in a singular form, such as 'the cultural environment of Central Finland'. In these programmes, the (regional or local) environment with its natural characteristics and its heritage sites is seen as a unifying

element, forming a base for a shared identity. Thus, the programmes function as tools in regional identity building. In recent years, the plural use of the concept has increased: the concept of cultural environment is used in plural when the desire is to emphasize the importance of the diversity of cultural environments, such as distinctly different features between rural and urban/modern cultural environments.

The so-called participatory turn (Giaccardi 2012; Roued-Cunliffe and Copeland 2017) has had a strong impact on international heritage and environment management and policy discourses. This turn has transformed heritage into an area of collaborative action and engagement of diverse stakeholders. At the European level, *the participatory emphasis* is brought to the fore, for example, in the Faro Convention and in the Council of the European Union's notices titled 'Council conclusions on participatory governance of cultural heritage'. The Faro Convention includes a conceptual innovation of a 'heritage community' that is expected to be included in the preservation and management of heritage (EofC 2005). The Council conclusions include a list of concrete suggestions on how participatory governance of cultural heritage could take place at the local and regional levels (CofEU 2014).

The Finnish cultural environment programmes emphasize participation and collaboration, though this emphasis is often narrowly understood as collaboration between different administrative sectors. The main goal in the early programmes was to develop collaborative methods for built heritage protection; make it more effective by forming new built heritage working groups or extending already existing ones; distribute responsibilities and concrete work between different actors in the region; and develop collaboration and interaction between regional administrations and municipalities. One important goal was to integrate cultural environment values into regional land use planning and social and economic decision making.

The programmes have sought to encourage the inhabitants of a municipality, village committees and landowners to voluntarily care for heritage areas or sites. In some Finnish municipalities, participation in the preparation of cultural environment programmes has been wide-ranging, including, for example, representatives from zoning, nature protection, building supervision, agriculture, schools, day-care centres, travel agencies, local societies and museums. However, the possibilities of participating in the heritage site selection and valuation processes have been limited. Inventories and valuations of the programmes have been commonly conducted by heritage and environment experts.

The notion of *sustainable development* has been present in the Finnish cultural environment programmes from the beginning. The roots of the current discourse of sustainability and its governance can be traced back to the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972 (Rouhinen 2014). The term ‘sustainable development’ was enhanced by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) that was set up in 1983 to unite countries in pursuing sustainable development together. The Commission’s report, titled ‘Our Common Future’, introduced and defined the term (UN 1987). Finland adopted the idea of sustainable development within the political framework early. Finland used the political guidelines of both the Stockholm Conference and the World Commission on Environment and Development to design and institutionalize national environmental and sustainable development policies at the end of the 1980s (Rouhinen 2014). Since then, the cultural aspect has been integrated into the discussion on sustainable development, especially in the context of regional development and planning. In this discussion, cultural sustainability is commonly understood as development that respects and promotes the cultural conceptions of the people involved.

Environmental education is a core idea enhanced by international environment and heritage policy actors. For example, the LIFE Programme – the EU’s funding instrument for the environment – was broadened in 2007 with a strand focusing on environmental education, pedagogical interests, awareness-raising campaigns and knowledge-sharing projects. Respectively, the Finnish regional cultural environment programmes underline the educational aspects of caring for and promoting the cultural environment. In the programmes, environmental education is understood in the sense of raising the awareness of civil servants, elected officials, consultants and the citizens about the cultural historical values of the environment. The aim of the education, via the informing and offering of expert services to the municipalities and their inhabitants, is to improve the level of zoning by taking cultural historical values into consideration. Especially in the early programmes, it was often stated that one of the barriers for development of heritage care is the negative attitudes towards protection. In the earliest programmes, the education was, however, mainly directed towards regional and local officials. Later programmes have sought to communicate more directly with the local inhabitants and to pass on to them cultural historical knowledge of locally valuable, characteristic cultural environments.

<A>**Scalar Relations in Finnish Cultural Environment Policy**

<FL>The analysis of the administrative context of the emergence of the cultural environment policy in Finland indicates how the policy is based on close interdependence and interaction of administrative structures – and their changes – at the different scalar levels. The start of the creation of Finnish regional cultural environmental programmes relied on policy reforms at two scalar levels: regional policy reform that had started already in the 1980s and policy reforms at

the beginning of the 1990s related to Finland's preparation for accession to the EU. In the administrative and legislative changes made in the 1980s and 1990s, responsibility for regional development was transferred from the national to the regional and local levels. At the same time, the programme work became one of the instrumental tools in regional planning. The law on regional development from 1993 emphasized independent development of regions. In 1994, Finland was divided into twenty regions and they were given their current significance as regional administrative units. In 1995, Finland joined the EU, and the EU's regional target programmes became a key to complete regional programmes in Finland (Sotarauta and Karppi 2009; Vartiainen 1998). The 1997 reform strengthened further the role of the regions: since the reform, the regions have been governed by regional councils, which serve as forums of cooperation for the municipalities of a region. Regional councils are central actors in promoting the region's interests. The main tasks of the regional councils laid down by law are regional development and regional land use planning. The councils are also largely responsible for the EU's Structural Fund programmes and their implementation – funding through which the EU seeks to support and revive the economy, livelihoods and development of remote or less-developed regions or regions suffering from declined industries or other economic difficulties.

Regional Environmental Centres, established in 1995 as a part of the regional policy reform, have had a core role in coordinating the cultural environment programme processes in Finland. The Act on Environmental Administration from 1995 defines the tasks of the Regional Environmental Centres as follows: 'The Regional Environment Centre is responsible in its territory for the tasks concerning environmental protection, land use, nature protection, care of the cultural environment, building control and use and management of the water resources prescribed and laid down on it' (Laki ympäristöhallinnosta 1995: 4 §, translation SK). In the law,

promotion of the management of the cultural environment and preservation of the cultural heritage is mentioned as one of the highlighted tasks of the centres. In 2010, the Regional Environmental Centres were disbanded and their tasks were transferred to the newly founded Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY).

There are major differences between the Finnish regions in terms of resources for preparing cultural environment programmes and investing in cultural environment policies and management. Since 2000, the regional cultural environment programmes have often been prepared in projects funded by the EU's structural and social funds. In addition, EU funding has been used to create new or update existing inventories of cultural environments in the regions and to arrange educational or participatory activities for local people, such as courses on traditional craft skills.

<A>Conclusions

<FL>The regional cultural environment programmes have a scalar political goal. Their purpose is to increase the understanding of heritage values in the environmental context and to strengthen the importance of heritage perspectives in broader environmental discussions, policies and management plans. The cultural environment programmes are promoted and used as tools to extend cooperation between heritage actors, various administrative sectors and other stakeholders. Their aim is to improve integration of cultural heritage into development and planning practices and thereby ensure its preservation and sustainable use. As a conceptual innovation, cultural environment is, thus, used to broaden the traditional scope of heritage. As a policy, it means downscaling the management of heritage. The discourse on cultural environment itself is multi-scalar: it relies on interdependence of various timely heritage discourses at

different scalar levels. Its downscaled policy reflects policy goals and structures at ‘higher’ levels.

The Finnish regional cultural environment programmes are an example of a policy in which the aims of the regional and EU levels merge. The regional cultural environment programmes have often been prepared as a part of broader regional projects funded by the EU. Both policy levels share the same interest in regions and their holistic development and identity building. At the regional level, the fundamental motivation behind the regional policies is to increase the competitiveness of the regions. The EU funding enables the regions to implement various development projects. For the EU, the support for regional development is a tool in its integration politics: viable regions are expected to increase the coherence of the union. In addition, the focus on ‘the regional’ draws attention away from ‘the national’, which is a scalar level often considered as problematic by the EU in its attempts to increase the feeling of belonging to the union and creating a European identity (Lähdesmäki 2014; Lähdesmäki and Mäkinen in this volume).

Due to its wide-ranging, transforming and context-specific meanings, the concept of cultural environment easily turns into a tool for politics of scale. Although the management of cultural environments is commonly structured on the basis of territorial administrative units, concrete spatial borders between cultural environments are impossible to draw, as the concept as such is flexible and relational. Cultural environment is, thus, characterized by an ambiguity of meanings. This quality increases its usability, for example, in identity politics, image building, place promotion and city branding.

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