Sustaining Support for Intangible Cultural Heritage

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Edited by

Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya,
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and Gregory Hansen

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SHIHAN DE SILVA JAYASURIYA

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PREFACE

SHIHAN DE SILVA JAYASURIYA

Sustaining Support for Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) continues the conversations on cultural heritage which commenced at a virtual conference held on August 3, 2020, at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies. The conference was spurred by the screening of my film – "Indian Ocean Memories and African Migrants" – at the Social Scientists Association, Colombo. The interest shown by UNESCO Global Network Facilitators, Dr Bilinda Nandadeva and Dr Gamini Wijesuriya, who attended the screening, was a catalyst to convening the conference. The Covid-19 pandemic further exposed the significance of heritage and the vulnerability of intangible culture. The book is a call to value ICH and an inspiration for academics, researchers, stakeholders, civil society, cultural practitioners and policymakers to understand the threats to sustaining heritage.

The binary of tangible and intangible heritage is a fault line. Rather than working to resolve definitional differences, the range of ideas and even ambiguities surrounding discourses on ICH emerge as resources to explore the importance of intangibility within contemporary heritage. UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage formalised a distinction between heritage that is tangible in its materiality and another form of heritage that is about skills, crafts and knowledge. This distinction has provoked considerable debate with regards to legal instruments, recognition, preservation and impacts. Within this discourse, we aim to contribute to research that investigates the rationales and repercussions of this distinction, and to critically consider the implicit assumption that the distinction is universally relevant. The nature of intangible heritage, its malleability and change are explored. To this end, we focus on the tensions between different forms of living heritage and the impact of heritage nomination – factors which influence whether the latter results in fossilisation of heritage or whether the 'intangible heritage' will survive its nomination. Whilst UNESCO's efforts at making ICH visible are effective in spurring national bodies to respond to the needs of local heritage practitioners, the conference draws attention to regional networks and

global alliances, such as the Commonwealth, which might be well placed to support cultural production and practice.

Of particular importance to me are the cries of marginalised communities who live within the trappings of poverty. Balancing the trade-offs in cultural maintenance with economic gains from cultural tourism is a tight rope to walk on. Sustainability of oral traditions and cultural performances, both religious and secular, is a main theme of the book as are the environment and global cultural heritage.

Marginalisation of intangibility is a burden on creating an inclusive society. Whilst the pandemic exposed global inequity, ICH is under further threat with the low priority that it receives from those who are able to support its practice. Communities articulate the interlacing of identity and heritage in diverse ways. Through heritage we re-live our past in the present and ensure its continuity in the future. As the chapters illustrate, cultural productions give voice to the voiceless. Whilst cultural production and agency of communities is brought out by the authors, a core element of this book is sustainability linked to enhancing economic and educational resources and their social needs emerge as key to the future strategy of heritage. The challenges at the local level with threats from globalisation need to be balanced carefully against the sensibilities of communities.

Heritage generally emphasises objects and places; ICH brings forth people and communities as agents and subjects. Intangible heritage takes many different forms, all of which raise particular intellectual and social challenges. The necessity to understand the entwining of tangible and intangible heritage and the need to consider them as integral to heritage is a prerequisite in sustaining cultural heritage. Pressures from society on the administrative and political authorities to reshape public spaces for the continuity of hereditary practices gained new impetus during the pandemic. But sustenance of heritage itself is threatened.

The book includes many years of fieldwork and research by a diverse group of scholars in various stages of their careers who spent the last year writing up the chapters for this book.

Co-editors Mariana Pinto Leitão Pereira and Gregory Hansen draw on their theoretical and practical expertise in heritage to weave the chapters together through a masterly Introduction and concluding Commentary to the book. Ritu Sethi and Bilinda Nandadeva contribute their vast exposure to the international heritage scene at UNESCO ICH committees. More specifically, their insider expertise and lived experiences on the resilience of ICH during the pandemic by Indian and Sri Lankan multi-ethnic communities, are invaluable. In fact, ICH has been a binding force for communities throughout the pandemic whose adaptability supported

sustainability. The *omba* and *majini* of Northern Mozambicans, the *jikkar* and *goma/dhammal* of the Gujarati Sidis in northwestern India and the *manja* of Afrodescendants in the northwestern province of Sri Lanka described by Chapane Mutiua, Beheroze Shroff and myself connect Africans and Afrodescendants separated by time and space. Survival of culture on the margins is played out through collective *manja* performances of Afrodescendants in northwestern Sri Lanka, which the community describe as their only heritage. Whilst the societal and economic support are significant in these cultural productions in the Indian Ocean, similar issues are highlighted by Gregory Hansen through Bluegrass in Arkansas. The role of green social workers in the loss of global environmental cultural heritage through the link between Covid-19 and environmental degradation is emphasised by Lena Dominelli. Cheryl Toman looks at preserving the environment in Gabon, through the narratives of Nadia Origo, a Gabonese sustainable development expert. The nine scholars approaching sustainability through their epistemologies in preservation, arts and crafts, folklore, ethnomusicology, anthropology, social work and literary studies, weave a rich tapestry of heritage. Their insider epistemologies and insider positionalities are powerful descriptors of the communities they describe and go beyond the all-too-common assumption that heritage is only history and archaeology.

Although the editors assessed the arguments in relation to contemporary scholarship, we do recognise that there is a diversity of opinion within academic discourse. Consequently, the specific arguments reflect the views of the contributors rather than a unified view of the book's editors. Similarly, the language used in the narratives by the contributing authors reflects their own positionalities.

INTRODUCTION

SITUATING INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A CHALLENGING PARTNERSHIP?

MARIANA PINTO LEITÃO PEREIRA

I heard that we are in the same boat.
But it's not like that.
We are in the same storm, but not in the same boat.
Your ship can be shipwrecked and mine might not be.
(Unknown 2020)

The SARS-CoV-2 or Covid-19 pandemic has generated uncertainties in the co-creation, practice and sharing of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). The initially abrupt and unequal disruptions in the daily lives of tradition bearers, communities of interest and heritage practitioners have now become a somewhat constant reality. As the opening poetic lines so ruthlessly express, the pandemic brought struggles that have been differently felt across the world, reflected not just in the uneven loss of lives, but also in the drastic change of livelihoods. Intangible cultural heritage has been lauded as a way for communities to bond and affirm identities, yet in all its possibilities, ICH is as fragile as the vulnerability of its practising communities. Nevertheless, ICH remains crucial as a vehicle and a resource for people to navigate in uncertain presents and futures. After all, intangible cultural heritage "[…] represents the art of the possible […]" (Hafstein 2018, 18), and is, mostly, about dealing with change (Bortolotto 2020; Erlewein 2015, 72).

The relationship between heritage in general and Sustainable Development (SD) has been strengthened in the past decades through organisations and individuals working at various scales and geographies. Agenda 21 (UNCED 1992) or the Hangzhou Declaration (UNESCO 2013) bear witness to the ongoing efforts and commitments to spotlight the role that cultural heritage can play as a pillar for sustainability. The various existing and possible (inter)connections that heritage, and particularly ICH,

can have with sustainable development need to be recurrently cultivated and situated (Labadi, Giliberto, Rosetti, Shetabi *et al.* 2021, 8). This is a nurturing process, one that demands understanding how ICH can be driven and created beyond the mechanisms of UNESCO[1], particularly at regional and local levels. As Stefano, Davis and Corsane (2012, 3) noted, "[…] the ICH concept operates at the international and national levels as a direct result of its conceptualisation and categorisation by UNESCO […]"; yet understandings and practices are much more nuanced, delicate and holistic at the level of communities, families and individuals who embody and create heritage.

The essays collected in this volume were adapted from the conference 'Intangible Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development', hosted online by the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, on August 3, 2020. The conference looked at the relationship between ICH and SD. '*Whose heritage?' 'Whose development?' 'Whose community?'* were some of the pressing questions raised in the context of the conference, imbued by Covid-19-related concerns. There was interest to explore the decentring of ICH from international bodies into intranational, regional and local institutions or networks; and to further address their (potential) role in enabling the practice and sharing of ICH. Two main points demanded further engagement: first, to demonstrate sustainable development and intangible cultural heritage need to be addressed through glocally[2] sensitive approaches. Second, to showcase how intangible cultural heritage is differently understood and framed when it is mobilised for sustainable development. As the Assembly of European Regions (2020) recently emphasised, heritage should become a tool – in fact, its own dimension (Erlewein 2015, 72) – to contextualise the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development, in their multitude, are mostly oriented by policies, actions and decisions formulated at international levels; however, they both need to be translated and worked with at regional and local levels, as well as within community and individual spheres (McGhie 2021).

This introductory piece lays out the threads connecting the voices of this volume and briefly sets the stage for the ensuing chapters, each

[1] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

[2] Glocal blends the adjectives 'global' + 'local' to align and reframe strategies for action and intervention, a recent concept that appears from the 1990s onwards and seems to have been first used in relation to business or economy (Roudometof 2015, 775, 776).

presenting various renditions of intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development.

Thread One: Intangible Cultural Heritage

UNESCO's 2003 *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* marked a striking point of departure: the Convention officially acknowledged and emphasised the acceptance of change through the concept of ICH.[3] Intangible cultural heritage also needs to be lauded for its conceptual breakthrough as an internationally agreed definition that placed communities at the centre of all "[…] cultural forms, their performance, their circulation, and their uses […]" (Hafstein 2018 4, 164), sustained through embodied practices and knowledge (Andrews, Viejo Rose, Baillie and Morris 2007, 125). With such a dynamic character, it is unsurprising that the concept of safeguarding was used throughout the 2003 Convention to refer to "[…] the measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage […]" (Article 2.3, UNESCO 2003), instead of the traditional idea of 'protection'. Protection appears to have become a synonym of 'deterring change', whereas safeguarding is now more connected to managing thresholds of change and of transition.[4] Bianco, Tint and Clarke (2017, 24) distinguish change from transition: change is 'an external event' or situation, whereas "[…] transition is an internal response to change […]", more correlated to experiences. Both change and transition are also at the core of sustainability.

Intangible cultural heritage has turned into a canonical term for documenting and interpreting personal narratives and representations of ways-of-being in and with the world. In turn, heritage has transformed into an umbrella framework of thought and perception that encompasses the many processes and expressions through which the past is given meaning and used in the present (Cambridge Heritage Research Centre 2021). Heritage unfolds and is 'done' in today's broader society, the values, manifestations and understandings prescribed to objects, to events, and to acts seen as 'continuing from or pertaining and referring to the past'. Some of these expressions tend to be separated into tangible and intangible, but

[3] See Article 2.1 for an official definition of ICH (UNESCO 2003).

[4] The idea of thresholds in relation to ICH, particularly food, was explored by Perla Innocenti on May 10, 2019, during the 20th Cambridge Heritage Symposium, in the presentation titled 'Stirring it up. Spaghetti Bolognese and the threshold of authenticities'. While initially applied to authenticity, thresholds of change are suggested here as more appropriate to capture the dynamic nature of intangible cultural heritage.

such distinction is a working frame that brings attention to certain knowledge clusters, such as intangible cultural heritage (Andrews, Viejo Rose, Baillie and Morris 2007, 125). Deacon, Dondolo, Mrubata and Prosalendis (2004, 11) explained that "[…] if the medium carrying most of the significance of the heritage is not primarily expressed in a material form (e.g. oral poetry), the heritage resource is designated as 'intangible' […]". There is, however, another approach that goes beyond material and immaterial concerns, namely, one that takes ICH to be, on the one hand, rooted on people, as *embodied* (Ruggles and Silverman 2009, 1); and on the other, as a process mediating "[…] cultural and social change through the continual construction and negotiation of identity, place, and memory. It is therefore active and performative […]" (Smith in Andrews, Viejo Rose, Baillie and Morris 2007, 126). The dynamic nature brought to the forefront by ICH is of relevance here.

At the same time as UNESCO's 2003 Convention, ICCROM[5] was developing its Living Heritage Sites programme, which soon inspired the creation of the 'living heritage' approach, one that has its parallels with ICH. Wijesuriya (2015) advocated that living heritage places its focus on managing continuity at four main spheres: use, community connections, cultural expressions, and care. It is based on people-centred approaches, the same emphasis that intangible cultural heritage has on communities. Fundamentally, though, living heritage un-aligns with intangible cultural heritage because it works on continuity driven by change, and therefore aims at "[…] long term sustainability in safeguarding heritage with an empowered community engaged in decisions made for them and their heritage […]" (Wijesuriya 2015, 10). Continuity, when looking at the ICH Convention, is only mentioned in relation to ICH providing communities with a 'sense of continuity' (Article 2.1, UNESCO 2003). Living heritage is guided by continuity in change, whereas intangible cultural heritage is often characterised by dynamic changes and transitions. In navigating these changes, the viability of ICH should be ensured, but does this mean continuity? To understand how intangible cultural heritage and living heritage un-align[6] on this aspect, there is a need to unpack 'safeguarding'.

Hafstein (2018, 128) has offered a relevant refocus of the definition of safeguarding as the co-curation of practices that have been interpreted as heritage. Curation opens the space for choice, selection and ultimately the

[5] International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property

[6] Unaligned concepts mean in this context that they are guided by different aspects. It does not in any way mean they are in opposition. In fact, they are both incredibly indispensable to explore all the potentialities of heritage.

possibility for *discontinuity*, which is indispensable when looking at sustainability. In this sense, the potential of a term like intangible cultural heritage, which is centred on change and not on continuity, is incredible when looking at sustainable development. Sustainability is an empty term and indeed quite deceiving when applied to heritage. In parallel to Wijesuriya (2015 - see the quote above), Labadi (2011, 116) also emphasised the viability of transmitting ICH, and hence its continuity, as an expression of sustainability.[7] Sustainability can be relevant yet requires caution. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2021), to sustain revolves around the intention to "[…] cause to continue in a certain state for an extended period or without interruption […]". This means, it avoids the need to sacrifice (Albert 2015, 16) or to acknowledge that some heritage expressions or practices have to be readapted and even discontinued given the impact they began having on our environment (e.g. shark finning that is needlessly pushing species to extinction) and on human wellbeing (e.g. female genital mutilation) (World Health Organization February 3, 2020; Ruggles and Silverman 2009, 2).

Albert (2015, 11) cautioned that "[…] the concept of sustainability has gradually developed into a paradigm for the conceptualisation of heritage and related values […]". The implications associated with this statement – which aspects of heritage are to be sustainable – still requires much thought (see also Erlewein 2015, 81). In some spheres, an expression of heritage might be understood as sustainable (Giliberto 2021, 80; Labadi, Giliberto, Rosetti, Shetabi *et al.* 2021, 8); however, there are heritage practices that also misuse resources. Even if these heritage practices are recognised as relevant by communities, not all expressions of the past become sustainable in today's unbalanced and unequal societies.

Essentially, heritage must be curated for sustainable development, and that may require discontinuing manifestations or changing them radically. Intangible cultural heritage, intrinsically composed by dynamic processes, should become a powerful partner of and for sustainable development by encompassing and allowing change and transition outside of continuity.

> "[…] if you believe humans can play a role within natural ecosystems then equally clearly some interventions should be capable of accommodation without losing integral values […]" (Dudley 2011, 176).

[7] The concept of transmission, as Tim Ingold (2021) recently noted, is a one-way process, and should instead be seen as a performative process of co-production and resharing.

Thread Two: Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is more than a key concept (Albert 2015, 11) or an approach on its own. It is an outcry to reconnect with the planet, to move away from anthropocentric frameworks into a greater awareness of interconnections and interdependencies. Scientists have agreed to use the term 'climate emergency' when addressing climate change (Fischetti 2021), and the most recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2021) proves how unequivocal human influence is on inducing extreme climate changes. Translating 'sustainable development' into everyday thinking and practice is ever more pressing. Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development was adopted in 2015 as the Millennium Development Goals reached their target date; Agenda 2030 puts forward a call for focused action and cooperation on SD through the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, n.d.; Labadi, Giliberto, Rosetti, Shetabi *et al.* 2021, 12). As McGhie (2021) described, the SDG are a rights-based programme "[…] tailored to local challenges and conditions […]" that aim to reduce inequalities and support world peace. They are guided by the five Ps – Prosperity, People, Planet, Peace, and Partnership – and one of its key principles is the 'leave-no-one-behind' pledge underpinned by equity and fairness (Sachs, Schmidt-Traub, Mazzucato, Messner *et al.* 2019, 805, 806).

An increasing number of researchers and professionals have worked to practice heritage as a driver for sustainable development (see e.g. UNESCO n.d. – Interactive Visual 'Living Heritage and Sustainable Development'); and have argued that a shift to a sustainable present should take heritage as a basic right to be experienced and conceived in ways that do not threaten other people's rights (McGhie 2021). The 2000-2010 decade was mostly focused on shifting attention from change in heritage as something to be controlled into change as an intrinsic and needed aspect of heritage; and from 2010-2020, it became clear that the focus has been to bring together ICH with sustainable development, as both are not just tools but dimensions to navigate change and face uncertainty (Bortolotto 2020; Erlewein 2015, 72).

Efforts to include culture as a pillar for sustainable development[8] have finally gained a grander scale with the reframing of heritage as transversal to all sustainable development actions (Labadi, Giliberto, Rosetti, Shetabi *et al.* 2021, 8; Lewis, Louis, Thomas and Wilson 2020, 11). It is no longer a question of whether cultural heritage should be harnessed

[8] Visible for example with Agenda 21, with the UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, or the 2013 Hangzhou Declaration.

in addressing global challenges (Giliberto 2021, 18), but to show the many ways this is practised, researched, formulated, and employed.

The partnership between intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development seems possible when sharing certain guiding principles, such as inclusive rights-based approaches that seek wellbeing. But there is one aspect that challenges this partnership: ICH places communities and people at its heart, in fact it does not exist without people. Sustainability, in contrast, must no longer be just a process of change that satisfies human needs or aspirations (Gonçalves, Mateus, Silvestre and Roders 2020, 360). It needs to be posthumanist.

Fox and Alldred (2020, 124) lay out a posthuman ontology that centres "[…] 'sustainable development' as ecological potential, independent – but at the same time inclusive – of (post)human capacities […]" (see also Wolfe 2010). A shift into posthumanism rests upon three main aspects: first, on models of relational understanding (how our actions 'affect and are affected'); second, on recognising that everything is context dependent, and contexts are uneven; and third, that human agency or values can no longer be the main axes for action but nevertheless remain crucial. To be posthuman is to redefine "[…] one's sense of attachment and connection to a shared world […by…] combining ethical values with the well-being of an enlarged sense of community, which includes one's territorial or environmental inter-connections […]" (Braidotti 2016, 25-27).

Sustainability is not a stage to be achieved or worked for through posthumanism. Sustainability is about harnessing the possibilities of becoming, the 'flow of multiple affects' that locate human aspirations for emancipation, fairness, and fulfilment within a wider ecological context (Fox and Alldred 2020, 124, 125; see also Nocca 2017). Transformative change and transitioning towards more sustainable presents require context-specific practices that are culturally sensitive; a re-centring on social and intergenerational equity[9], as well as balancing multidirectional approaches that go beyond bottom-up and top-down flows (Erlewein 2015, 73, 75, 82); and most importantly, a grounding on communities and glocal sensitivities/realities. What intangible cultural heritage allows is a finer tuning of the human role in posthumanism, a gearing of positionalities, actions, and expressions accountable to the guiding frame of 'leaving-no-one-behind' (see e.g. Leone 2018). Sustainability ultimately means to deal

[9] Social equity is defined after the General Multilingual Environmental Thesaurus (n.d.) as the "[…] means ensuring that all communities are treated fairly and are given equal opportunity to participate in the planning and decision-making process, with an emphasis on ensuring that traditionally disadvantaged groups are not left behind […]".

with human-propelled change, which requires understanding people and the place of ICH in our humanity. Intangible cultural heritage is, above all, the most fundamental expression of being human.

Spinning Threads & Framing accounts

This volume brings forth glocalised narratives that intersect intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development. As McGhie (2021) so well emphasised, the Covid-19 pandemic showcased our unbalanced relationship with the planet, not just as a global health challenge, but equally related to social (in)justice, knowledge access, opportunities for self-determination and resource distribution. These aspects need to be tackled locally as part of global agendas, a crucial part of which involves aligning intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development.

The voices brought here together draw not just on the manifold experiences of pursuing sustainability and safeguarding ICH, whilst tackling the Covid-19 pandemic; but also reflect the contributors' diverse positions as researchers, professionals, practitioners, caretakers, and individuals within communities. Each chapter shows a different facet of how heritage practices have unfolded alongside the uneven access to vaccination, different rhythms of easing lockdowns and lifting restrictions on movement and gatherings. The long-term impacts these ruptures are having on the unfolding of ICH remain uncertain. In parallel, the ongoing massive climate disruptions in different parts of the world during the summer of 2021 flagged once again the need for urgent action and the fragile interdependence of human and environmental systems. If inspired by post-humanist perceptions, then there needs to be a reckoning with how human agencies and agencies in and of nature are not just shaped in relation to each other; they are completely entwined.

Binding the chapters together are three streams of narrative, namely ICH and the Covid-19 pandemic; ICH and sustainability in and as performance; and decolonising ICH and sustainable development. Insights on ICH and the Covid-19 pandemic thread the first two chapters of this volume, setting the scene for the reader. Lena Dominelli (this volume) puts forth the concept of environmental cultural heritage and explores the role of social green workers as active cultural interpreters, who nurture wellbeing by caring for human environments. Environmental cultural heritage refers to how people, in their daily lives, dialogue with, and incorporate the natural environment. Endorsing human values includes looking after ICH and rethinking our relationship with the environment. The notion of care is indispensable to those working to improve the lives of communities, a topic

that bridges with reflections on care made in the heritage field by DeSilvey (2017) or Ireland and Schofield (2014). Dominelli (this volume) provides a picture of the key responses given by diverse countries to the pandemic, carefully placing the volume within a wider concern in recording the impacts of infectious diseases on humanity's heritage (see e.g. Piret and Boivin 2021). The chapter elaborates guiding principles for community engagement rooted on solidarity and driven to mitigate "[…] environmental degradation and structural inequalities […] featured in the Anthropocene […]" (Dominelli this volume). In dialogue with Dominelli's overview is Bilinda D. Nandadeva's chapter that places the spotlight on how the pandemic has impacted Sri Lanka. Nandadeva (this volume) draws from personal knowledge and an insider's perspective to reveal a shifting ICH landscape in Sri Lanka. Reactions to the pandemic's impact were explored through pilgrimages, religious festivals, funerary practices, non-religious celebrations, as well as traditional art and craft practices. The emphasis is on the 'malleability' of ICH and its practising communities in response to the uncertain futures exposed by the pandemic. 'Malleable heritage' is a concept gaining visibility when exploring adaptative governance within social and ecological policies (e.g. Lincoln and Madgin 2018, 938). Official sources and media reports show heritage being constantly re-imagined in relation to daily contingencies and mobilised for context-driven opportunities aimed at community bonding, self-expression, and self-determination. The depth of adaptability of ICH influences how it is practised and performed, yet such malleable character also requires compromises when channelled through the lens of environmental sustainability.

The ensuing four chapters delve into intangible cultural heritage in and as performance. ICH is rendered as something that is 'in the making', involving embodied interactions with the materialities and settings that surround us. The feeling that these practices are 'being done' conflates with the sense of sustainability, of a wanted or needed continuation. ICH as performance follows Haldrup and Bærenholdt's (2015) definition that meanings of heritage are created and enacted in the experience of that same heritage. ICH *as* performance is the process of making sense of what is *in* performance. Heritage is understood here as "[…] emerging out of the social practices and uses to which people put it […]" (Haldrup and Bærenholdt 2015, 52). The case studies depicted in these chapters elaborate on the complex tension between the desire to practise heritage and the various challenges hindering those same practices. Through diverse media, such as the body, instruments and language, the authors bring in powerful moments that detail how sustainability is more than continuity, as it refers to people's

emotional bonds and wholehearted commitments to engage beyond surrounding environments and communities.

In her chapter, Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya introduces the concept of 'dual heritage' to depict the cultural memories invoked in the (re)production and transmission of *manjas*, a collective expression of the Afro-Sri Lankan community at Sirambiyadiya. Dual heritage is centred on the coming together of expressions people emphasise from their multiple heritages. In the merging of lyrics, rhythms, reverberations and choreographies, *manjas* materialise the remembrance of places of origin, colonial encounters and migration. De Silva Jayasuriya (this volume) uses the lens of ethnomusicology to discuss the tensions of making ICH visible through bodily performances and language safeguarding, but with meagre livelihood prospects. Measures to safeguard ICH become part of the society's sustainable development when rooted on intergenerational co-creation, capacity building and accessible education. Moreover, sustaining heritage requires contexts of expression, where younger generations can become apprentices, and the livelihoods of performers can thrive. In this sense, the empowerment of local communities is what allows them to continue caring both for their intangible heritage and for the landscape that enables the ICH manifestation in the first place.

De Silva Jayasuriya's gaze on the Afrodescent Sri-Lankan community intersects with Beheroze Shroff's (this volume) contribution on the livelihoods of the Muslim Sidi healing mediators in Gujarat, India. Through the personal stories of Sidis – Indians of African descent – Shroff discusses how heritage is enacted in a fragile intertwining of the spiritual and the material. References to African heritage are embodied and contextualised in Gujarat, particularly through sacred dances, devotional songs, healing practices and the playing of instruments. Heritage is an exercise of identity localisation, and Shroff's chapter (this volume) bears witness to what Welsch (1999) has termed 'transculturality'. Transculturality describes how cultures have become so deeply entangled that they transgress national borders. In this sense, the Sidi's migratory past is made visible through the African gestures and worldviews that are woven into the fabric of Gujarat's everyday life. Sustainability of ICH is here inextricable from imagining better and viable futures, ones in which the older generation Sidi's commitment to balance spiritual practices is brought together with the demands of modern life. These imaginings, however, are accompanied by intergenerational struggles to sustain, share and make a living of the Sidi's disappearing knowledge, acquired through lifetimes of dedication and affection to rituals and places that are currently undergoing deep changes.

Sustaining ICH within 'local discourses' is a topic that also flows throughout Chapane Mutiua's chapter. The intersection between new tendencies, attitudes and lifestyles with traditional religious ideologies can be contested when practices are not embraced by dominating tendencies, a challenge that is shown by Mutiua (this volume). The focus of the chapter is the *omba* and *majini* rituals in northern Mozambique, bringing forth the inextricable bond between indigenous beliefs and the sustainable management of surrounding natural environments. The traditional knowledge of elders in Angoche, Mozambique imbues the natural world with the spiritual – without nature, the supernatural would have no means of manifestation. Mangroves and forests, for example, are not just protected by spirits, but they can also take a human shape. Such anthropomorphising is accompanied by a sense of respect and responsibility towards nature, a symbiotic understanding in which human life depends on a healthy environment. Mutiua's (this volume) approach connects to Byrne's (2019, 2, 4) 'postsecular heritage practice' and the posthuman turn in heritage studies that encompasses the immanent or embodied presence of the spiritual. Indigenous knowledge and belief systems centred in nature are vital for guiding identity performances that foster sustainable lifestyles and address people's self-determination within planetary frames.

In constant performance are the aesthetics of ICH, the use of one's senses to fully perceive, experience and embody intangible heritage (Funk, Groß and Huber 2012, 12). Whereas Mutiua's chapter (this volume) delves into the spiritual connection channelled through ICH, Gregory Hansen's chapter brings out the auditory and visual senses in ICH, and how they are a sensorial part of giving meaning to tangible spaces. Through a photo essay, Hansen (this volume(a)) describes the sustainability of fleeting moments, such as those encapsulated by musical events. The photographs create a thematic dialogue with the written insights on a performance series called Bluegrass Monday, taking place in the Collins Theatre, Arkansas, United States of America. Bluegrass music portrays an American-style country music fuelled by improvisation and characterized by balancing innovative musical expression with the strong presence of older musical styles. Hansen (this volume(a)) connects the spontaneity that transverses musical creativity with the different temporalities of 'permanence', brought about by the built heritage housing the intangible performances, and by the fixating characteristic of music photography. The photographs are also momentary representations of Hansen's intimate relation with bluegrass music. This intersperse of the fleeting and the permanent drives the relation between what Hansen terms 'cultural conservation', which emphasises intangibility, and 'historic preservation', emphasising tangibility. The

physical permanence of the theatre where Bluegrass Monday unfolds is, in this way, meaningfully sustained through the temporary, yet regular intangible performances that take place inside the theatre. Hansen's chapter also connects back to the chapters by de Silva Jayasuriya (this volume) and Shroff (this volume) when relating ICH sustainability with economically self-sufficient performances. Grassroot support systems, stemming from inside and outside networks of interest, contribute to the feeling of connection and continuity in the life of local communities.

The last section of the volume tackles decolonising intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development. Decolonising, in this context, implies "[…] difficult conversations and reflections on the meaning of cultural institutions [… and…] the necessity to create room for multiple perspectives showing the different contexts that determine how we look at objects or themes […]" (ICCROM 2019). Decolonising involves rethinking how knowledge has been created, shared and used, particularly in relation to ICH and SD; and means engaging with multiple perspectives to conceive of more holistic understandings of the past in the present. Ritu Sethi's chapter (this volume) links with Hansen's contribution in overcoming the intangible-tangible divide. Sethi (this volume) gives insights into multiple scenarios in India where communities and institutions have made heritage a resource for sustainable development. Knowledge, in the form of inventories or databases, allow communities of interest to access information on their own heritage and be better equipped to make informed decisions on sustainable practices. The reader is also introduced to cases of tradition bearers repurposing heritage practices to bridge income inequalities and generate new opportunities for commerce; the change of traditional artforms encouraging sustainable tourism and empowering women; as well as disaster management policies helping to revive intangible heritage manifestations and the livelihoods of communities. These are vital examples showcasing change as a means to sustain ICH, case studies that are the result of long-term commitments and interventions, the nurturing of respect for heritage and its surrounding environment, as well as the continuous involvement of both decision makers and local communities. In parallel to these case studies, Sethi (this volume) lays out both the vulnerabilities made visible by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the coping strategies derived therewith. Three policy recommendations are also put forth for measuring the economic contribution of heritage practitioners, having more robust intellectual property tools, and creating appropriate health insurance and pension schemes. Only by creating landscapes of support, and caring for those environments, can ICH bearers, professionals and transmitters sustain ICH in the face of the various unpredictable societal changes.

Caring for the future and documenting the changing environments in which different communities live are concerns that also flow through Cheryl Toman's chapter (this volume). Toman (this volume) looks at the infusion of geography, ecology, and heritage as expressed in the literary work of the Gabanese author, Nadia Origo. The literary artform, as written knowledge, becomes a tool to engage with sustainability and an expression of worldviews that compose intangibility. Origo narrates, through an African ecofeminist voice, the commitments to environmental protection and the various encounters with Gabon's oral heritage. Ties to the land and the concern for nature include perpetuating oral traditions that reflect the interactions people sustain with the environment. By participating *with heritage* in the world, we deal with 'the way things feel' in our everyday lives – with 'worldings' – and can fully embrace the web of relations (Crouch 2015, 185) that bind humans and natural environments. By showcasing Origo's approach to nature, Toman (this volume) is compelling the reader to also become an environmental activist, raising concerns for vanishing natural resources and human-nature relations. In this way, the chapter reflects a cultural shift in literary texts that has given rise to literature as an active process of shaping perspectives, a type of transformative reading. In parallel, Toman (this volume) also seeks to bring out Afrodiversity, that is, the valuing of diversity and difference in African countries, calling out for a demystification of Africa's image and how sustainable development is viewed from within African contexts. The point of the glocal is brought back for both ICH and SD, since the priority should be to solve local problems with local solutions that feed into and are fed by the global sustainable development agenda.

Finally, bringing together the diversity of contributions in this volume is Gregory Hansen's Commentary (this volume(b)), which opens the path for present and future conceptualizations of ICH and SD to be proactive, descriptive, prospective, renewed and resurging. This edited volume on *Sustaining Support for ICH* deems heritage as inextricable from sustainable development, and its contributing authors inspire its readers to rethink and challenge current worldviews. Authors branched into different intellectual traditions and networks, the chapters blurring insider and outsider approaches, leaving visible the meshes and tangled strands of the tapestries that intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development are a part of. ICH and the current climate emergency depend on a delicate equilibrium of interdependencies. We face an urgent need to re-connect and realign humanity and its contexts. If it is said that ICH cannot be when conditions of practice are not in place, then how can humanity expect to

continue being when it is endangering the very context it depends on to exist?

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