14 Revoicing cultural landscapes

Towards resilient intangible cultural heritage and positive social relations

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The chapters in this volume have explored how individuals and organisations of a national majority and minority interact via intangible cultural heritage (ICH), particularly at live cultural events that draw on the past of the minority culture. They asked what happens to minority ICH when its social context becomes increasingly polyvocal. In general, 'insiders' held broadly open perspectives towards 'outsiders'; and most outsiders (from tourists to resident incomers) felt, even if only temporarily, a 'part of things'. Challenging prominent narratives about the distinction, or even division, between the two ends of the spectrum, these nuances are not always reflected in the way many people and organisations think and talk about cultural identity and belonging, within and outside a heritage context. On one hand, insiders may not articulate to themselves or others who their intended audiences are (or are not), leaving uncertainty as to their own expectations and boundaries, and lack of signposts for others to be able to observe them. And on the other, outsiders (including long-term resident incomers) can be seen 'self-policing' due to their own perception of feeling an outsider.

As the chapters – applying different lenses to various themes and with different disciplinary approaches – collectively argue, there is value in a more holistic approach to safeguarding minority ICH alongside one that accounts for specific ICH practices; and there is scope within these ecosystems for more self-reflexive, productive dialogue and activities within and between individuals and organisations. If ICH can lead to, be the arena for, and be more resilient as a result of, these productive dialogues, then revoicing can offer a pathway to understanding how national minority cultures can practise resilient ICH alongside positive, sustainable social relations. The research in this volume thus seeks not solely to safeguard specific ICH elements – although in seeking conditions for resilient ICH, it seeks to do this too. It is more concerned with the extent to which the actors in this polyvocal ecosystem have the capacity to work through the boundary experiences (see Moenandar, Moran-Nae & Hodsdon, this volume) that inevitably accompany ICH at the crossing of majority and minority cultures, in a manner that is both satisfactory for the individual, and balances the needs of different stakeholders in a socially just way – that is, that creates the conditions of possibility for minority ICH to be resilient. This balancing, or revoicing, we suggest, is one way positive intergroup contact (e.g. Dixon 2001; Valentine 2008) might be brought to bear on

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these complex heritage contexts. We call this capacity *heritage literacy*[1]: the ability to 'critically relate to heritage' and to assess the power dynamics surrounding it, as well as to have a dialogue about one's own relation to it (cf. Dibbits 2020; Dibbits 2017). The term 'heritage literacy' thus implies the same reflective dimension as similar metaphorical uses of the word 'literacy' (e.g. 'media literacy', 'gaming literacy', 'narrative literacy' (cf. Romero-Ivanova, Kingsley & Mason 2019; Liveley, Slocombe & Spiers 2021)). It not only entails the ability to engage in a certain practice and make conscious choices about how to act in relation to it, but to also critically reflect on the practice and to be resilient vis à vis persuasive and manipulative uses of it (cf. Moenandar et al. 2023). In our contexts, heritage literacy would, for instance, mean the capacity to make conscious decisions about, on the side of members who identify with the national minority, being able to claim one's space, and to signal that within that space certain rules of engagement apply – and to articulate what they are in a way that supports positive social relations. On the side of outsiders, heritage literacy would allow people to (be alert to the need to) recognise such signals as an invitation to participate and perform, or a request not to; to be aware of their own assumptions or stereotypes regarding the minority culture; and a willingness to check in productively with those who are insiders. It would also entail the ability to accept being corrected when one inadvertently might act inappropriately. Not all members of a majority culture will be willing to be attentive to such signals and respect them; but for those who are, as well as for insiders who want to make more conscious choices when mediating their ICH, the findings of our research could be translated into useful tools for negotiating boundary experiences – to more explicitly and consciously set, respect, or cross the boundaries of heritage communities. The intended outcome of revoicing is expressions of ICH that enable all across an ecosystem to benefit from heritage as a cultural and social good, but which still enable a minoritised culture to amplify and celebrate their distinctiveness in a confident way.

Towards revoicing: some examples

Envisaging the conditions leading to resilient ICH and good social relations requires a notion of the way in which change might be imagined to happen. Such a theory of change may not relate to quantitative or indeed directly measurable indicators, which are often neither practical nor realistic in cultural change interventions (Belcher, Davel & Claus 2020; Spaapen & Drooge 2011; Arensman, van Waegeningh & van Wessel 2018). We can, to some extent, measure how initiatives might effect local change; for example, the Kirkpatrick Model (Kirkpatrick 1994) charts a trajectory from reaction to learning, to behaviour, to results. This might describe the change process from a heritage literacy approach in which, for example, a majority media author is surprised to learn more about a minority culture that they were unaware of, educates themselves about minority perspectives on it and realises assumptions they had been making, adapts their language accordingly in future articles, and as a result visitors to the area who read these articles might seek different cultural experiences, and minority cultural individuals who

read them feel more confident about the value of their culture and their place in it. The same process might happen with different actors in the ecosystem whose sphere of influence (Belcher, Davel & Claus 2020) might lead to a shift in policy, for example. Such a linear model is useful but does not necessarily capture the whole picture. We can, however, consider change in the context of the complex system of potential actors that overlaps – here, more or less directly – with those in the ecosystem of the research's object of study itself. Murphy and colleagues, for example, suggest that 'ecosystem thinking lends itself to a certain vocabulary of changemaking' (2020: 10), and propose a mindset of '"planting changemaking seeds of curiosity" about the people, institutions, and phenomena circulating around social problems. Planting changemaking seeds also entails cultivating skills of "budding" changemakers and nourishing them among individuals within a "living community"' (Belcher, Davel & Claus 2020); these might, crucially, be beyond an action's line of sight, where a '"seed dispersal" metaphor reminds us that efforts to cultivate changemaking can take root elsewhere' (Belcher, Davel & Claus 2020). These and approaches like them – dynamic not static, emergent not fixed – move beyond a static, cause-and-effect theory of change to account for the emergent nature of activities across the ecosystem in myriad, subtle ways.

The *Re:voice* project (that comprises the research in this volume) aimed to better understand how different groups engage with ICH (and each other through that ICH), in diverse cultural landscapes which have shaped and are shaped by national minority cultures. Its primary aim was not to act as an intervention; nevertheless, translating the research findings into 'real' world impact is a key concern, and the project included activities that applied this heritage literacy approach to revoicing in various ways. In this section, we share some of these as examples of how revoicing might look in practice, and to suggest how we theorise that it might contribute to sustainable social and cultural development by planting seeds in the minority ICH ecosystem.

Creative spaces for heritage literacy

The themes of the research were explored in Cornwall via an original, co-created performance, developed specifically by and for the *Re:voice* project that leveraged the flexibility and immediacy of creative practice as a way of exploring and expressing the inquiry. Director Agnieszka Blonska (a member of the research team and Senior Lecturer in Acting and Theatre & Performance at Falmouth University) worked with the Tuesday Night Fun Club, a community choir based in Penzance. Over several months of workshops, Agnieszka and the choir considered what ICH meant to them, as a range of people both locals and incomers, by focusing on Penzance's revived midsummer festival, Golowan. The workshops used the research questions as a starting point, but in this creative space there were no preconceptions about what themes should be explored nor how the issues arising should be contained and shared. With the choir, a performance including spoken word, music, and dance was co-devised (Figure 14.1). Key in realising the show's impact was the project's partnership with the Public Programme at Tate St Ives (an art gallery

Figure 14.1 Re:voice performance at Tate St Ives, UK, 29 April 2023, directed by Agnieszka Blonska. (Photo: Steve Tanner)

in Cornwall that is part of the prestigious UK-wide Tate group of galleries). Over 500 people attended the show, included within the Tate's programme *The Last Weekend,* alongside a Barbara Hepworth exhibition, other creative *Re:voice* outputs, and artist workshops. For the Tate, the performance fulfilled two key aims of learning activity: people feeling empowered to participate – as one audience member put it, the show 'Connected the gallery to real people and lived experiences…'; and promoting Cornwall's heritage and sense of place – another found it 'a really interesting and challenging view of cultural specificity'. Melanie Stidolph, Curator of the Public Programme, reflects that 'the performance perfectly supported Tate St Ives' objective to invite different people and partners to contribute to Tate, give partners agency and make the public voice visible through collaboration and long-term relationships, building memories and connections' (pers. comm.). Delivered with Cornwall-based production company imPOSSIBLE Producing Ltd, the collaboration was Highly Commended in the Cornwall Museums Partnership Cornwall Heritage Awards in 2024. At the end of the show, participants and audience literally sowed a seed, later planted in St Ives Community Orchard in a collective action acknowledging the seasonal perception of time so inherent in Cornish ICH events.

As an avenue to engage with the project's aim to find ways for ICH to remain resilient in a changing social context, the creative context provided opportunities that it would be hard to reproduce in more formalised contexts. Feedback from the event collected by the Tate clearly shows the value of a 'safe space' to productively

and respectfully reflect on themes such as home and belonging. The following comment clearly demonstrates how such spaces can have a profound impact:

> We hadn't planned to attend *Re:voice*. We just happened to be ready for a sit down as we were passing the gallery. Wow. I am so glad that we did. It was a life-changing experience. I cried all the way through. Having moved to Cornwall from [elsewhere in England] at the age of six, over fifty years ago, I have never felt like I 'had a right to be here' or that I 'belonged here' because I wasn't born here. *Re:voice* was an epiphany moment for me. A deep shift in personal belief. It has taken me a few weeks to process that a lifelong limiting belief I held about myself was actually false.
>
> (Audience member, *Re:voice* Tate St Ives, April 2023)

This can impact outsiders' perceptions too, as another audience member said:

> One of our party was from New York originally and we talked about [Golowan festival, the ICH that was] referenced in the piece. She came away with a greater interest and understanding of the roots of cultural activity here, and how it lives and breathes.
>
> (Audience member, *Re:voice* Tate St Ives, April 2023)

Collaborative cultural programming, set in a reflective, 'safe' context, clearly has the potential to generate profound reflection and conversation. Moreover, situating the performance within the broader cultural scene in Cornwall brought ICH to a different context, a different audience, and so opened it out to different conversations and perspectives. As these quotations demonstrate, the impact may be felt by an international tourist or by a long-term incomer resident. Striking here is the sense that the subject matter itself was clearly experienced as surprising, as new, and as having the potential to significantly change one's perspective. Often, broader societal tensions can lead to a more fraught, defensive discourse that is not germane to open reflection about identity – but this example demonstrates the practical value of a positive discourse based on an appreciative rather than critical lens (see Koreinik & Hodsdon, this volume; also e.g. Sonn, Agung-Igusti & Komba 2018). We suggest that a valuable revoicing tool might be to consider ways to facilitate and encourage these often difficult conversations about identity and belonging within cultural programming, providing an authentic space in which to learn, reflect and become more aware of minority cultures and one's relation to them.

National initiatives for visibility

Creative practice was a means of revoicing in Latvia, too, in a different way. The University of Latvia Livonian Institute (comprising members of the *Re:voice* project team), the UNESCO Latvian National Committee, and the Latvian National Cultural Centre jointly launched an initiative that declared 2023 the Year of Livonian Heritage. This aimed to draw attention to Livonian heritage in Latvia,

especially outside areas where Livonians have been concentrated during the past two centuries. The idea of this experimental approach was that, through joining and coordinating different activities into one broader framework, there could be a substantial increase in awareness and knowledge in society at large about Livonian heritage – both tangible and intangible. It also sought to inspire interest in furthering Livonian heritage in various domains, from cultural and societal life to entrepreneurship. Engagement and participation was far greater than expected, and the increased visibility of Livonian living heritage (see web page www.libiesugads.lv) reforged links between historical territories and the cultures that they shaped, even in the relative absence of people in those places able to transmit ICH across generations. The audience was deliberately communicated as being completely open, to involve outsiders living in Livonian historical areas and beyond, with events specifically designed for inclusiveness such as Livonian Heritage Day, introduced on the first Sunday after Spring solstice. Building on insights from the research project indicating that Livonian resilience is threatened by a lack of awareness, the project team wanted to introduce a 'new tradition' to highlight places belonging to the Livonian historical space. Participation could include using the Livonian colours of green, blue, and white (e.g. putting up a flag or decorations), or collectively performing the ancient bird-awakening tradition, a revived ritual marking the start of the Livonian traditional calendar year. Throughout the day, over 50 places raised Livonian flags or decorations, including the Latvian Ministry of Culture; and over 50 events were held across Latvia and beyond, such as in several places in Estonia. Engagement with these and other high-profile awareness-raising activities was extensive, with Livonian flags on the Estonia-Latvia border in the twin villages of Ainaži (Latvia) and Ikla (Estonia), and one of the most famous bridges in Latvia – Sigulda bridge in the centre of the historical Gauja Livonian area – decorated with Livonian flags, greetings exchanged in Livonian by the whole board of Riga City Council, and a special session held in the Parliament of Latvia, amongst others.

There is no doubt that the Day and the Year as a whole contributed significantly to achieving their intended impacts. Raising awareness and interest in Livonian ICH through the readily accessible and highly visible colours of the flag was effective in not only marking Livonian presence, but also importantly in stimulating questioning and curiosity amongst majority individuals and organisations, wondering what the flag represented and what it meant for them. The effect was to expand the semantic scope of Livonian colours, previously having been associated closely with a more genealogical present-day Livonian community, to encompass a wider sense of belonging to Livonian space. In many places, these have now been installed permanently, such as their integration into the new flag of Limbaži county. Activities also led to further collaborations involving different stakeholders, from municipalities and NGOs to entrepreneurs and state institutions. This experiment shows the potential of even small, evidence-based changes (such as symbolic usage of colours and leveraging the social connections of ICH) leading to significant impact, revoicing areas that have long lacked acknowledgment of their links with Livonian culture by making its ICH accessible and inclusive.

Policy and practice

Given the relatively much smaller base of stakeholders influencing Livonian culture, our work could more readily fill gaps in information, awareness, or activity than in the other case study regions – an indication that effective approaches to revoicing are highly contingent on the challenges and affordances of the particular ecosystem. For example, the research interviews themselves ignited interest in a previously invisible layer of heritage: a number of local singing and dancing groups in Vidzeme reacted by changing their names to more explicitly convey their locality and Livonian roots. The Latvian project team participated in various panels regarding the formation of the ICH protection framework in Latvia, and were able make evidence-based recommendations to inform, for example, the development and implementation of the Law of Latvian Historical Lands, and participating in the development of new programmes within the largest financing body for culture in Latvia, the State Culture Capital Foundation, for the safeguarding and development of ICH. The team also played a lead role in discussions about the implementation of the ICH law of Latvia (adopted in 2016), with the Ministry of Culture and the Latvian National Culture Centre, specifically regarding cultural spaces and their handling and inclusion in the UNESCO National ICH list, and adjusting and creating specific support mechanisms. Overall, the close relationship between the need to gather baseline data with raising awareness of Livonian at a policy level enabled the project team to integrate emerging findings with policy actions embedding a better understanding and articulation of what creates a common space in the case of very dispersed, diverse heritage that has fragile links echoing in the cultural landscape. Through more fully understanding a range of people's perceptions of what constitutes Livonian ICH, it was possible to focus a working definition of the cultural space as a unified entity. This also led to a broader discussion of the separate ICH elements, and the cultural space as a group of modifying ICH elements. The discussion concluded that, from the perspective of the National Intangible Heritage list, although single elements are more vivid, it is not so much these separate elements that define the space, but rather their combination. Integrating them was felt to make the activities and sustainability of the cultural space more flexible, and more accessible, such that strengthening the ICH ecosystem as a whole rather than focusing on separate elements is more likely to ensure their resilience.

A broader evidence base also enabled more targeted tools to be developed, such as one geared towards a more self-conscious resilience at the organisational level, designed for engagement with ICH stakeholders. In Frisia, a trilingual (Frisian-Dutch-English) workshop was run in collaboration with partner Keunstwurk (a Frisian arts and cultural organisation), to facilitate conversations amongst Frisian amateur theatre groups about questions affecting participation and resilience. Project data showed that these groups tend to focus on the current and next production and often do not construct longer-term plans. They also rarely articulate or acknowledge the importance of their productions for Frisian culture and heritage, despite Frisian amateur theatre being a key, enduring practice by which Frisian culture is shaped and maintained. The workshop – framed around a light touch

'board game' developed together with members of the *Re:voice* project team – provokes conversations around arts, language culture, community, and the companies' dreams, fears, successes and failures. Keunstwurk consultants will integrate the board game as a resource to support their meetings with amateur groups. Similarly, in Cornwall research sought to identify and capture audio-visual (AV) archive material relating to ICH events – from uncatalogued film reels in individuals' garages to institutionally held and digitised (for analysis of some of the items in the resulting database, see Monk, Tattersall, and Santi, this volume). It aimed to record and reflect on visibility, accessibility, and longevity of the events' AV archives, analysing in particular where insiders possess agency over archives of their own ICH and where they do not. The process, and conversations with archivists and other stakeholders, indicated the need for a more clearly articulated strategy underpinning collaboration, preservation, and communication around ICH AV archives. As a result, a working group developed a new *Chartour An Govskrifva Klewwelyek Kernow*, or *Cornish Audio-Visual Archive Charter*, which is freely available online at cornishavarchivecharter.com (Falmouth University 2023). Stakeholders are invited to sign to the Charter as a basis for further work to embed collections policy and practice in such a way that access to archives is thorough and equitable.

The project team also sought opportunities to engage heritage practitioners and future academics in these ideas: the 2023 *Leeuwarden Summer School on Linguistic and Cultural Diversity* (organised by staff of the Minorities & Multilingualism department of the University of Groningen who were also involved in *Re:voice*) was devoted to the theme of 'Heritage, Identity and Inclusivity' and built on the project's findings. It included a day-long symposium, in which team members delivered a keynote lecture outlining the concept of revoicing; short talks on Frisian theatre, the Livonian cultural space, and creative audio techniques for research and engagement; and methodological workshops on the ethics of qualitative research in national minority contexts. The summer school was a collaboration with the Heritage Lab at the Reinwardt Academy. This institution, part of the Amsterdam University of the Arts, offers programmes in cultural heritage, and the Heritage Lab develops special training and workshops for those working in the heritage industry. This collaboration ensured that insights were shared with a number of heritage professionals, such as museum workers, archivists and teachers. Feedback indicated that participants came away more aware of the need to include historical minorities and their ICH in attempts to come to more socially just mediation of cultural heritage. Taking place in the capital of Frisia, Leeuwarden, the summer school also included an evening open to the public, organised in collaboration with the chair in Multilingualism and Literacy of the local NHL|Stenden University of Applied Sciences. Here, a pre-screening of the documentary produced for the project (*Pass It On*, dir. Florence Browne (2023)) took place, and Frisian and Livonian poets read from their work.

At the time of writing, these activities are still evolving, and it is our hope that the notion of revoicing can inform, or begin conversations about, adaptable future ways of ensuring ICH is resilient in a way that also attends to positive social relations – in our regions and beyond. Reflecting on the project, we are particularly

struck by the extent to which discussion alone about the questions addressed by *Re:voice* was so often in itself a quasi-intervention, so rarely are they purposively and constructively discussed in these contexts. This was not only the case among majority individuals and organisations who sometimes found themselves surprised by a positionality (and often privilege) that they were unaware they possessed, but also minority ones who may not always explicitly articulate their perspectives and needs in relation to their ICH, or may not feel empowered to do so. As influences, even small, gain traction, some seeds have begun to thrive and flourish across the ecosystem, bearing fruit of their own; some are saplings still seeking to gain a hold; others are yet to germinate (and may never do so). It is our hope that revoicing can take shape not just as an abstract concept but as the basis of an approach for real-world change in supporting national minority cultures to ensure resilient ICH and positive social relations.

Limitations and areas for future research

Revoiced ICH as we envisage it draws on existing knowledge and practice about cultural difference and integration, on our dataset from three minority cultures across four countries, and on our various activities described above. As we outlined in the Introduction, the contexts we focus on throughout this volume represent a comparable yet contrasting sample of marginalised spaces in European nations where national minority cultures sit. Our description of revoicing therefore demonstrates a diversity of ways in which past and present power hierarchies that have shaped cultural landscapes can be addressed, within a unified framework and approach that is readily adaptable to locally contingent circumstances and histories. As such, we hope that the book resonates within similar contexts both in Europe but also globally, and can inform ways of safeguarding ICH that are sustainable and enable as many as possible to appropriately reap its social benefits. And given that we make no claim that national minority cultural contexts are unique – rather that their distinctiveness is under-studied – there is much here too that may usefully inform work on in-migrant ICH practices or other local traditions (particularly those subject to an outsider gaze) that are not imbricated with national minority cultures or in marginalised spaces.

Of course, there are many avenues still to explore that were not possible within the scope of the research that gave rise to this volume. Perhaps the most immediate of these is to widen the focus to include other forms of ICH. While live cultural events were chosen as being most easily and thoroughly reflective of the broad range of people who come together in these polyvocal contexts, there are of course different 'grammars of inclusion' (Eriksen 2015) for different elements of ICH: many operate as clubs or societies, or need practitioners to possess or acquire specific knowledge, skills, or experience, for example. These will form different dynamics around the boundary experiences at their edges, different requirements to become involved, and differently distinct communities of practice. Although some of these are considered here as they emerged (e.g. music and dancing), a next

step in refining a revoiced practice will be to consider more explicitly a range of elements of minority ICH.

In the context of better understanding different types of ICH community, it would be interesting too to explore further the interactions between nested identities in terms of the inter-group dynamic studied here: where ICH specific to a place (within a town, say) overlaps with the minority culture (within a region) and where it does not, and how the two relate to each other in the experiences, perspectives, and identity framings with respect to inclusion or exclusion from the ICH. We also want to test further the extent to which these principles can resonate with other contexts in Europe and also beyond. Needless to say, drawing conclusions from this data about what is appropriate in other cultures without including people from those cultures in the conversation would be contrary to the fundamental principle of revoicing. Focus on the local scale thus needs to be preserved, but is not inherently plural since micro-level observations can point to macro-level patterns across regions and cultures, as we have suggested in this chapter and elsewhere. In Chapter 13 we took a first step in this direction, bringing people with perspectives and experiences from Okinawan and Māori cultures into dialogue with the theme of revoicing. Noting that in some global contexts the socio-cultural dynamics will be very different in other ways (including more starkly contested), if this small sample is at all representative of other minoritised national cultures, we might observe that, while the contexts and solutions may be different, revoicing – as a means of identifying practical pathways to heritage literacy by deploying tactics of positive contact between groups such as allyship, safe spaces, and reflexivity – is a valuable one, even in these very different contexts from the European ones studied in the rest of the book. In addition, further attention is warranted on intersectional identities within these already complex systems. We collected information on participants' ages and genders, and we did not find any notable effects; still, these and other variables would certainly deserve to be studied more fully and directly (for existing research in this area see e.g. Clopot & McCullagh 2020; Finkel 2010; Meissner 2018; Pfoser 2018). Although the present sample was too small to consider the experiences of people of colour, people who identify as LGBTQIA+, or those with disabilities, for example, it would be valuable to consider how multidimensional identities, particularly those that are already marginalised in other respects – including social class – might benefit from a revoicing approach that problematises boundaries and essentialising constructs and seeks inclusive, cohesive solutions. It would also be useful to consider in more depth the broader cultural experiences of temporary and permanent incomers as they move into these regions. To what extent is the distinctive culture variously attractive, off-putting, or simply irrelevant to different types of incomer? What do they think about the ethical issues of their position in a minority cultural space? What are their perceived barriers or opportunities to engaging in it, and what value do they see it holding for them? Better understanding these perspectives will give valuable information about how the sorts of tools outlined above might be effective.

Revoicing the ICHC?

As we observed in the Introduction, safeguarding ICH has become imbricated – in academic discourse and in policy – with the 2003 UNESCO Convention that coined the concept, albeit that it built on existing perspectives and formulations. As we stated there, this book is not a critique of, nor a response to, the ICHC: rather a complement to it that acknowledges its influence (Melis & Chambers 2021) but does not treat it as a variable. Here, though, we briefly place ICH in the UNESCO context, to consider how revoicing might be seen in relation to the advantages, pitfalls, and shortcomings of the ICHC.

Where the ICHC has been seen to work well, many of the benefits reflect those we have observed throughout this volume: its potential to normalise and share cultural richness in a universalising social justice perspective (Nic Craith, Kockel & Lloyd 2019); a greater sense of pride and confidence in seeing one's own cultural practice recognised on a global scale (Foster 2011; Hafstein 2018: 157); or the potential to transform local visitor and creative economies by enabling ICH to be leveraged as a cultural product owned by the minority culture. These characteristics are among the intended effects of heritage literacy, which should ensure that members of a minority culture can confidently claim agency to have their identity and practices respected in a globalised context, as it facilitates autonomy and the ability to make one's voice heard within the majority context. It needs to be acknowledged, however, that precisely a *lack* of voice has been pointed to as one of a number of worrying 'side effects' of ICH (Hafstein 2018: 157). Indeed, critique around the ICHC describes a range of potential pitfalls. These include the potential for commodification or 'condensation' for an outsider gaze that might endanger the practice (e.g. Eichler 2020; Gilman 2015; Hafstein 2018; Testa 2020); co-option by state parties and other powerful actors (e.g. Abungu 2012; Bortolotto 2012; Kearney 2009; Munjeri 2009) that may – despite the Convention's intent to involve those practising ICH on the ground – omit key, less powerful stakeholders from the process (Silverman 2015; Marrie 2009); detachment from the local context (Tauschek 2011; Hafstein 2018, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004); a need to negotiate identity to meet the Convention's requirements (Fournier 2020); or a preservationalist approach, despite the Convention's claims to the contrary (e.g. Alivizatou 2012), potentially meaning continuing to practise the ICH becomes a burden imposed on the practitioner by others (e.g. Foster 2015). Where there is lack of cultural visibility, as for the European national minorities being considered here – or, conversely, a hyper-visibility that can lean towards stereotyping – there is often insufficient targeted resourcing, policy, or recognition. Many members of national minority cultures feel this threatens their cultural vitality, and while these benefits are intended to be delivered with the ICHC, the addition of a supranational framework to this dynamic is as likely to exacerbate as improve it, as all of this critique implies. For those seeking to safeguard ICH within the ICHC, these risks must be weighed alongside the potential benefits. Heritage literacy in itself is unlikely to fully counter these risks, and will probably need to be complemented with or informed by other literacies – such as policy literacy (Park & Lee 2015),

cultural literacy (Maine et al. 2019), narrative literacy (Moenandar, Alber & Thirlway 2025) – to ensure that revoicing will result in minority voices being truly heard in decision-making and the institutionalised mediation of their ICH.

Beyond the potential pitfalls attendant with the process of engaging with the ICHC, authors have also noted its shortcomings in terms of scope and definitions. These include its lack of inclusion of language as a distinctive element (e.g. Marrie 2009), a compromise that presents an insuperable barrier to some states' ratification (Nic Craith, Kockel & Lloyd 2019). It delineates between tangible and intangible types of heritage in ways that may not reflect global ontologies nor fully describe how heritage 'works' (Abungu 2012; Nic Craith, Kockel & Lloyd 2019; Smith & Campbell 2017). It does not easily accommodate hybridity which, as Kuutma observes, 'continues to be regarded as a negative feature from the perspective of heritage politics' (2013: 34), which instead seeks a purity or authenticity of practice stemming from a particular 'national or elitist perspective' (Smith & Campbell 2017). This implies a need for a critical mass of practitioners, and can result in fragile, fragmented ICH communities struggling to demonstrate the viability, indeed the existence, of their ICH. For hybridised and less visible European national minorities, these shortcomings are particularly stark. The encroachment of majority culture on minority ICH that makes safeguarding crucial may in some cases, where a distinct element cannot be clearly articulated, preclude inclusion within the UNESCO framework – a challenge that has been experienced first-hand in the case of Livonian. And as discussed in Chapter 1, its terminology has been described as too blunt, with discussions about the definition of 'community' and 'group', in particular, ongoing (e.g. Blake 2019, 2009; Bortolotto 2012; Noyes 2006). Relatedly, the assumptions and essentialisms that seem to surround these terms have implications for who is able to inherit, and who pass on, the ICH over time (Noyes 2015). And crucially, it does not sufficiently account for the social basis within which the ICH takes place: as Noyes argues, 'safeguarding does not guarantee the social base of either specialist practices or communal traditions. Moreover, the possibility that the social base might shift of its own accord is not taken into account by the UNESCO framing' (Noyes 2015: 167; see also Noyes 2012).

The need to focus on, critique, and find ways to overcome these risks and shortcomings has, as we argued at the beginning of the book, obscured a broader social and cultural perspective that can bring fruitful understandings of how different groups engage with and value living heritage. In the preceding chapters, by decentring UNESCO we aimed to refocus on dynamics within ICH between different groups of people, in which the ICHC (or other self-reflexive safeguarding measures) is just one possible mode and context of their interaction. In our research, people not only often articulated the value of their ICH in relation to social, political, and economic forces, but the events' performativity was reflexively bound up with them as well; organisers articulated the potential for an outsider gaze not simply as a facet of the event itself but as a manifestation of broader issues, such as lack of resource or recognition of their identity and culture more broadly, harmful stereotypes, other negotiations such as language, overtourism, or as reflective of a housing crisis exacerbated by tourism and affluent temporary and permanent incomers.

In addition, the chapters have shed light on dynamics based around day-to-day, person-to-person interactions that take place, to reiterate Noyes' description that we quoted in the Introduction, at 'the human scale in which bodies encounter one another and actions excite and demand answering action' (2015: 172). Focused attention on this 'throwntogetherness' (Massey 1995), particularly pronounced in these complex marginalised spaces (described in Chapter 1), has enabled a more nuanced understanding of how people from different groups engage with ICH and each other. Hybridity and innovation was seen as being potentially key to allyship, particularly important for more fragile cultures, where space for engagement with the ICH by outsiders who make no claim to insiderness could be a powerful tool for revitalisation, or innovation in musical or other forms from outside the culture could be key to engaging younger people. Language emerged as particularly important, not so much in terms of the need for formal recognition of the minority languages involved (although this too), as its imbrication in social and cultural ecosystems, where becoming involved in a language community of practice could provide a means for outsiders to move towards an elective belonging which, in time, could render them legitimate 'culture bearers' of an ICH. Similarly, we saw how ICH practice can be a vital means of transmitting language, rather than vice versa. The fuzziness of the terms of the ICHC, so frequently noted elsewhere, would be problematic in terms of the multiple 'communities' implicated in these complex contexts; and the notion of a 'culture bearer' in particular is clearly insufficient here. Although there are those insider-organisers who clearly *are* culture bearers in the sense used by the ICHC, boundary experiences happen even for them, forcing them to continually negotiate their relation to the ICH and other people. And at the porous edges of culture-bearing are multiple negotiations of participation – the potential for temporary or longer-term involvement on the basis of behavioural affiliation or the possibility of deeply held relationships with the practice from people who were born and live elsewhere; people for whom the relationship is more ambiguous (perhaps permanent incomers) but who are nevertheless playing a vital role in the practice's maintenance and transmission; or the prospect of elective belonging by outsiders whose involvement in *other* local communities of practice may enable them to transcend essentialisms. Overall, the grammars of inclusion in ICH practices are complex negotiations not just within the ICH community, but around and beyond it.

Revoicing national minority cultures' ICH: a new orientation

We suggest that an adaptable, holistic revoicing approach can overcome some of the risks and shortcomings of the formal processes required of the ICHC or other top-down safeguarding practices that have been described as ways of circumventing it (see e.g. Stefano, Davis & Corsane 2012), which likewise carry risks in terms of marginalisation for these contexts. Revoicing can sidestep the 'institutionalising tendencies' (Dos Santos & Müller 2012: 221) of these approaches in that it does not rely on local, national, or international institutions to the same extent. Although these can be vital in providing the confidence of official sanction and in facilitating

policy change – as indeed the example from Latvia above shows – there is nevertheless a potential 'metacultural' element that, even when minority actors are more involved in the process, inherently changes the practice and people's relation with it (Hafstein 2018) and risks commodification and some of the other pitfalls that have been much described in the literature. A literate – in all the senses mentioned above – revoicing does not require articulation of a distinction between tangible and intangible heritage, nor does it assume that a culture will necessarily wish to preserve a particular practice (though does give stakeholders means of doing so), allowing space for agency surrounding its loss (cf. DeSilvey 2017).

If ICH is a diagnosis for which UNESCO is a cure that has side-effects (Hafstein 2015, 2018), are there avenues here for a preventative health maintenance regime? In practice, such a regime has to do with identifying and nurturing the social and cultural conditions for ICH specifically, and national minority cultures in general, to thrive. This does not imply, of course, that there is a 'one size fits all' approach. While in theory there may be a more polyphonic range of 'culture bearers' than is often considered, in practice this will vary – from the boundary between ICH practitioners and others being porous, to impermeable, and everything in between – and must be balanced with the identity claims of those who identify with the minority culture or the local identity being expressed. In common with previous work that has sought to disentangle ICH from UNESCO and suggest alternative approaches (Noyes 2015; Stefano, Davis & Corsane 2012; Herman 2017), we argue that taking a more holistic, systemic view of ICH ecosystems will enable all the actors influencing its practice to be taken into account – including more nuanced and explicit reflections on who the 'culture bearers' are who might practice and inherit it, and how the role of ICH as a social good can benefit all in a sustainable, cohesive way. In peripheral, rural regions where tourism and so-called 'lifestyle' incomers play a major part in the economic, social, and cultural life of the area, inequalities produced by these and other processes of social change and minoritisation mean that all the voices might not be invited to speak, or might speak at different volumes. And so heritage literate individuals and organisations seeking to be ethical actors socially, and to play a role in ICH's continued vitality, could seek to understand these grammars of inclusion and of exclusion in local contexts: framed by UNESCO should it be relevant, but also in their own right, as a pathway to the ICH's resilience and a sustainable, cohesive society. A revoicing approach might be seen, then, as a prevention rather than a cure.

This has to do with creating sufficient awareness and tools for all in the ecosystem to orientate themselves (Liboiron 2021) appropriately towards the ICH, so that minority individuals feel empowered in amplifying their own cultural narratives, majority individuals and organisations seek opportunities for allyship, and proactive, heritage literate reflectivity is practised by all. Tools or actions (which minority and majority individual organisations could separately or collaboratively be involved in producing and disseminating) might emphasise the importance of voices – who has a voice, and what, where, and how they speak. What is said about ICH and the way it is said can have a profound influence on how ICH and the culture it belongs to takes its place in a broader imaginary, as well as the values

and beliefs attached to it. Tools might include style guides for journalists and other media, particularly those in the tourism and hospitality sector. They also might involve adding new voices to existing ones – literally, by finding new ways to draw in new speakers such as through ICH practice as a 'gateway' to an endangered language, or by involvement in a broader community (of practice, and in space) when a minority language is spoken in daily life. They would emphasise the importance of spaces – who is in them, and what they do there. Acts of allyship can amplify the visibility of the minority culture as a whole in the physical landscape, and ICH practices can be ideal opportunities to display and perform these acts, such as displaying flags or other signifiers. And they could offer guidance to inform negotiations, as heritage literate visitors to ICH events, and outsiders within a cultural space, become better aware of their outsiderness and its implications; and as they navigate whether to stand back, get stuck in, or acknowledge their error if they choose wrong – both in their interactions and where they put their bodies in space. Actions' effects could range from tiny impacts to enormous ones, depending on the sphere and nature of control and influence of each heritage literate actor (see Belcher 2020). Overall, they might be tools that make more explicit how to navigate the boundary experiences between majority and minority cultural practices – especially when those boundaries are ambiguous, shifting, and differently experienced by different actors in the ecosystem.

ICH in marginalised national minority cultural spaces arguably cannot afford to rely for its resilience on boundaried conceptions of the actors in its ecosystem, or fixed constructs of what they are doing there and how they are contributing to its vitality. The social and cultural change in these regions is only increasing and the ability of those cultures to confidently celebrate, articulate, and sustain ICH such that it remains valued – or to choose not to do so – can only continue if the polyvocality of these contexts is acknowledged, understood, and worked within. This may embrace outsiders, or it may not: key in this context is the existence of positive choices and respectful spaces in which these negotiations and conversations within and between groups can take place; and tools that can be used alongside or instead of the ICHC to enable this. We hope that this book offers a first step to developing a more holistic, adaptable framework embedded in the social ecosystems that contain ICH; to ethically, appropriately embrace these changing landscapes for the benefit of national minority cultures at the margins of Europe in all their diversity.

Note

1 Partly a translation of the Dutch term 'erfgoedwijsheid' (Dibbits 2017), that literally means 'heritage wisdom', but follows the term 'mediawijsheid', or 'media literacy'.

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