

*Critical Heritages of Europe*

# REVOICING INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

PERSPECTIVES FROM THE MARGINS OF EUROPE

Edited by

Laura Hodsdon, Valts Ernštreits, Kadri Koreinik,  
and Sjoerd-Jeroen Moenandar

ROUTLEDGE



# Revoicing Intangible Cultural Heritage

*Revoicing Intangible Cultural Heritage* draws upon an original, wide-ranging dataset to show that the dynamics and ethics of participation in European national minority cultures' intangible cultural heritage (ICH) are more nuanced than has previously been articulated.

Arguing for an approach to analysing ICH that reflects societal change in regions that are historically those of national minorities, contributions to the volume focus on three regions across four countries. This allows for comparative exploration of exemplar contexts that span a range of circumstances in which European national minority cultures thrive and strive for voice and recognition. It explores how a wide range of people engage with national minorities' ICH and seeks a better understanding of the ethical and practical dimensions of this participation. It proposes a heritage literate 'revoicing' of ICH: to create socially positive pathways to resilient ICH, and in turn ensure ICH is an arena where these positive social relations are shaped as part of an evolving ecosystem into the future.

*Revoicing Intangible Cultural Heritage* takes an interdisciplinary approach ideally placed to interrogate the interplay of different groups with ICH from multiple perspectives. This makes the book essential reading for academics and students working in heritage studies, sociolinguistics, cultural and event studies, sociology, creative practice, and cultural geography.

**Laura Hodsdon** is Associate Professor in Heritage, Culture & Society at Falmouth University. She was Project Leader of the *Re:voice* project and its UK Principal Investigator. Her research focuses on heritage and landscapes, with particular interests in social justice and how different people engage with heritage.

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Perspectives from the Margins of Europe

*Edited by Laura Hodsdon, Valts Ernštreits, Kadri Koreinik, and  
Sjoerd-Jeroen Moenandar*

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Perspectives from the Margins of Europe

**Edited by  
Laura Hodsdon, Valts Ernštreits,  
Kadri Koreinik, and  
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# Introduction

## Intangible cultural heritage at the margins of Europe

*Laura Hodsdon, Kadri Koreinik,  
Sjoerd-Jeroen Moenandar, and Valts Ernštreits*

Each year on 23rd December, the Cornish village of Mousehole celebrates Tom Bawcock's Eve. According to local legend, Tom Bawcock braved terrible storms to bring back a huge catch of fish to feed the village, which the villagers made into a 'Starry Gazey' pie. The relatively recent, but now-traditional, celebrations involve lantern processions through the streets, serving the pie (a dish of pilchards, egg, and potatoes, the fish heads and tails emerging through the crust of the pastry), and singing 'Tom Bawcock's song' in the village pub. Mousehole is a picturesque fishing village in the far south-west of Cornwall, UK, a region whose industrial past of fishing and mining has been replaced by over 5 million visitors a year and an estimated one in ten houses as holiday homes, as well as an increasing number (particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic) of permanent incomers working remotely or retiring to a rural idyll. Over time, in a village well on the 'tourist map', the event increasingly attracted attention from ever larger numbers of visitors. The narrow streets became over-crowded, and sometimes raucous, until one year many villagers no longer felt comfortable for their children to process along the street. The next year, the event was held incognito and low-key inside the village hall, limiting who could participate and spectate to those who were, literally, insiders.

But *were* the spectators mostly tourists, or was this a narrative that picks up on broader discourses responding to the social change the region has seen? If these additional bodies owned holiday homes in Mousehole and were residents for some but not all of the year, were they village 'insiders' to be included in the 'invitation only' event, or 'outsiders' in the same category as tourists? Or does their position depend on their relationship with the village outside of the event itself – in which case how do we consider a 'community' formed around an intangible cultural heritage (ICH) event such as this as distinct from other kinds of community? Does a person with Cornish ancestry born and bred in the nearby town of Penzance have any more or less right to be considered an 'insider' at the event than a Mousehole resident who has recently moved from London? Are there differences in the ways that all these people should, ethically, relate to and participate in the event? And, most importantly, how might any of them navigate the answers to these questions – and gauge their position and behaviour accordingly – so that the event remains resilient and social relations remain positive?

### **National minority cultures and the margins of Europe**

These and similar dynamics play out not only in other places across Cornwall but also in other post-industrial, rural regions where a traditionally distinctive cultural space has become increasingly intertwined with a globalising dynamic that brings individuals, organisations, and influences from the national majority and beyond. Many of these spaces have in common a peripherality in relation to urban centres and the national majority, and are, literally, at the physical margin of their respective nation-state; they are places where a touristic imaginary of a rural (often coastal) idyll has replaced traditional industries; and are cultural landscapes imbricated with a minority culture that is, to varying degrees, separate from – although also embedded in – that of the national majority. These physically marginal areas are, not by coincidence, also often places of social, cultural, and economic marginalisation due to their distance from urban centres and majority culture. Along with some 200 other groups in Europe protected as national minorities, these cultures often include elements that distinguish them within, or across, national borders. Such variations are increasingly leveraged as a strategy of place-making at local or regional scales. But they can present a complex picture relative to the national or European normative cultural imaginary, as variance from dominant identity practices may activate narratives of alterity. Stereotypes used to construct ‘us’ and ‘them’ often associated with spatial distance (such as ‘East’ and ‘West’ (Said 1995); see Macdonald 2013: 19; Nic Craith 2008) can provide the discursive basis for a contemporary, exoticised ‘other’ within the same territorial space, even while manifesting their specifically European origin (Macdonald 2013: 20), as will be seen on several occasions in this book.

Despite these characteristics, these cultures remain imbricated within the political, economic, and socio-cultural life of the nation state, meaning identities have long been hybridised in myriad ways. This creates potential for a more permeable inter-group dynamics between ‘majority’ and ‘minority’, accompanying a fuzziness of spatial or discursive boundaries between the two, as might be manifest in the vignette with which we began this chapter. Despite recognition, such as through the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities (FCPNM), in Europe national minority cultural spaces are often unknown or poorly understood, even by many who live within the same national boundary (even, indeed, within the minority cultural space itself), for whom the state represents a contemporaneously, if not historically, more homogenous whole. This ambiguity underlies much of the dynamics around ICH – and the potential implications, whether positive or negative – that frame the inquiry in this book, since the circumstances that can ensure ICH remains resilient are, we argue, linked to the social and cultural interplay between majority and minority (see Chapter 1). Minority heritage is at risk of being appropriated by the majority (Xanthaki 2019), in no small part due to its lack of visibility and commensurate lack of majority awareness about its distinctive cultural value. This can allow these groups to become discursively invisible (Grote 2006; Donaldson 2006), where ‘European minority’ is used instead to refer to in-migrant groups or others who have been, and continue to be, marginalised.

By the same token, work within regional studies has observed that peripherality is itself narratively constructed (Paasi 2010; Plüschke-Altöf 2016) as part of those macro-economic processes that structure centre—periphery relations within a nation state. This has tangible implications on the economic and socio-cultural resource available to peripheralised places; however, this does not mean that peripherality cannot be contested (e.g. Pfoser 2018; Willett 2020), including by appeals to a European identity that acknowledges ‘unity in diversity’ more than the nation state might (Crepaz 2019). Whether within a framing that appeals to constructs of Europe or otherwise, articulation of collective identity is key; indeed, one definition of national minority culture is those that ‘show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion, or language’ (Preece 1998: 28). While other definitions are available (see Molloy 2013 for a summary), we draw on the principles of the FCPNM to understand ‘national minority culture’ to refer to groups that have a long-standing link to a territorial area that does not align with national state borders (Council of Europe 2016). In this book, we focus on a cross-section of these: Cornish in the UK, Frisian in the Netherlands, and Livonian in Latvia and Estonia. These manifest shared cultural and geopolitical characteristics and also represent a contrasting sample of minority cultures at the spatial and socio-economic margins of their respective countries. They range in size and critical mass from small in number, geographically dispersed and critically endangered (Livonian), to a fragile but revitalising tradition (Cornish), to an unbroken tradition and nearly half a million native speakers (Frisian).

Cornwall (*Kernow* in Cornish) has remained to some extent distinct from England, having Celtic origins and links with Welsh and Breton cultures. Kernewek, the Cornish language, had waned by the late 18th century: although classified by UNESCO as critically endangered, since the 1900s it has undergone a revival, alongside other Cornish cultural traditions. Cornish identity was recognised by the UK government in 2014 under the FCPNM; in the 2021 UK Census, 18% of respondents in Cornwall indicated they identified as Cornish (Office for National Statistics 2021). Physically and economically peripheral (its GDP 30% lower than the UK average), tourism brings around £2bn to its economy each year: a double-edged sword for cultural identity. Arguably most famous for beaches and attractions such as the Eden Project or Minack Theatre, Cornwall has a rich tangible cultural heritage, including the UNESCO Cornwall and West Devon Mining World Heritage Site. Its intangible heritage is equally rich but less visible in the national imaginary, or subject to imaginaries rooted in the romanticised tourist gaze (Moseley 2013). Narratives of Cornwall abound with pirates, quaint seaside villages, or rugged mining communities. It has been described as a ‘perpetual destination’ amid ‘romantic travelogue, period drama location and seasonal tourism journalism’ (Monk et al. 2019).

Livonian culture (*līvõ kultūr* in Livonian) is indigenous to Latvia and south-western Estonia. One of Europe’s most endangered minority groups, its language is spoken fluently by fewer than 20 people. Historically inhabiting much of modern Latvia and modern Estonia, by the mid-19th century Livonians endured in two isolated areas either side of the Gulf of Rīga: Salaca Livonians across the Latvian-Estonian border; and Courland Livonians on the Courland peninsula (the ‘Livonian

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Coast'), where they remained until they were exiled following the two world wars and Soviet occupation. The Livonian Coast today is peripheral, its infrastructure underdeveloped amidst nature reserves and beach resorts for leisure tourism. Only a minority of residents in these areas have Livonian roots; most are majority holiday homeowners. Widespread belief that Livonians became extinct in the 13th century dominated until the 2000s, and Livonian heritage remains largely absent from the tourism narrative (Šuvcāne & Ernštreits 2018). Nevertheless, over the last two decades Livonian heritage has become increasingly visible, and the Livonian community in exile retains links with its historical area through cultural events. In the Salaca Livonian area on the Latvia-Estonia border, Livonian heritage has left traces on the cultural landscape: in its Livonian-like dialect of Latvian, place names, as well as offering-caves, hillforts, and other tangible remains. A resurgence of interest in Livonian heritage is noticeable here, too – a renewed interest stemming in part from the Livonian Cultural Space's 2018 inclusion on Latvia's national list of ICH. Livonian ancestry gatherings have begun; there are burgeoning linguistic, folkloric, and archaeological research and exhibitions; and Livonian is increasingly appearing in creative practice such as poetry and music.

Frisia (*Fryslân* in Frisian), with its 650,000 inhabitants, is the only officially bilingual province of the Netherlands and has developed a strong cultural infrastructure of its own. Far removed (by Dutch standards) in the north from the large urban centres such as Amsterdam and Rotterdam, many people, including inhabitants of Frisia itself, see it as peripheral. Some 450,000 people speak Frisian, the majority of whom live in Frisia. Culture and the arts are increasingly directed outwards as well as inwards, with tourism and the branding of Frisia as destination in the contemporary experience economy. Due to processes of globalisation, digitalisation, and immigration, as well as policies regarding Frisian language as an institutionalised part of the province's government, the public sphere and education are gradually shifting from maintenance and revitalisation through language itself, to seeing Frisian as part of a larger multilingual ecology, in which an essentialised Frisian collective identity seems to lose ground.

As has been frequently observed – and as can be seen in the diversity as well as commonality of our case studies – 'Europe' is a fuzzy concept, confounding attempts to delineate its borders (e.g. Kockel et al. 2020; Nic Craith 2008). Its institutional, experiential, and spatial manifestations and borders (Paasi 2001) have been explored by different schools of researchers from across a variety of disciplines; and as Whitehead and colleagues observe, there will always be 'multiple and competing ideas of European heritage, as actors call upon different pasts or connote them differently' (2020: 11). As they also note, heritage has been deployed in various ways to play an active role in shaping these, including into 'a positive identity narrative rooted in a rich and varied, and yet shared, European past' (Whitehead et al. 2020: 3), which has in turn shaped what is and is not seen as heritage (Smith 2006). Indeed, shared policy instruments at the European level articulating European cultural heritage inevitably continue to shape it (e.g. Kockel et al. 2020: 12; Zito, Eckersley & Turner 2020). Although authorised heritage discourse is linked with the formation of nation states (Smith 2006; Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge 2000), Europe as an imaginary has, as its policy instruments imply,

been the subject of a self-reflective discourse about its shared yet diverse heritage (Kuutma 2013; Macdonald 2013, 2012; Schreiber 2019; Tauschek 2011). Appeals to a shared European heritage narrative comprise a ‘repertoire’ of ‘distinctive – though not exclusive or all-encompassing – [...] ways of doing and experiencing the past’ (Macdonald 2013: 2; see also Nic Craith 2008).

Narratives of a shared Europe, then, can be shaped according to particular agendas, some of which are more inclusive than others (as e.g. Whitehead and colleagues explore (2020)). Whether in a European context or outside it, ultimately the ‘entanglement of heritage in both the politics of togetherness and the politics of division needs to be recognised by contemporary heritage policy and practice’ (Whitehead et al. 2020: 227), and it is this dynamic that underpins the chapters that follow. In this volume, we consider descriptors where relevant (such as ‘European’, ‘English’, ‘Cornish’) as shaped and reshaped via identity practices, key among which is ICH, and view them in relation to the practice and performance of the ICH itself, rather than seeking to define them. Likewise, we consider our cases in terms primarily of the (more or less) shared socio-cultural history of Europe’s nation states that has shaped the fluid, ambiguous contexts in our marginalised regions, along with the possible illusion of homogeneity between majority and minority (rather than taking ‘Europe’ or ‘European-ness’ as a variable, as do recent volumes on European heritage such as those of Kockel (2021) and Whitehead (2020) and colleagues). That is, the ICH we study is in and from Europe – with no implications as to the boundaries around that space.

## **Heritage**

This is a book about ICH; but it is not a book about UNESCO. As many have noted, the former can barely be discussed without the latter, the discursive object being inextricably linked to its origin within the 2003 UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereafter ICHC; e.g. Hafstein 2018; Melis & Chambers 2021; Munjeri 2009; Stefano 2012). UNESCO was founded following the Second World War to leverage the power of positive inter-group contact in fostering good relations (cf. Stoczkowski 2009), and as such is driven by a desire for social cohesion, as is the research presented in this volume. As noted above, national and international bodies have been instrumental in shaping and defining what counts as heritage, and of these, UNESCO must be counted as a particularly powerful voice (cf. Hafstein 2018). The role of these dynamics is described in Laurajane Smith’s widely used concept of authorised heritage discourse (AHD), and many authors have drawn attention to the specific processes by which hegemonic notions of heritage are adopted (e.g. Waterton 2010) as well as related processes of inclusion and exclusion (e.g. Hall 1999; Naidoo & Littler 2004).

The ICHC was developed in part in response to calls for a less hegemonic, Western-centric conception of what heritage is, and aims to recognise and empower cultural traditions that did not fit within previous frameworks. It defines ICH as the

tradition, practice, or living expression of a group or community, particularly expressed through the domains of oral traditions and expressions, performing

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arts, social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, and traditional craftsmanship [sic].

(UNESCO 2003)

Although the mobilisation of ICH has made inroads into the AHD, it is far from dismantling it, and may in some ways perpetuate it (Akagawa & Smith 2019; Smith 2015). Alongside the operation of the AHD and inherent power hierarchies of national and international cultural and political institutions, in our context of national minority cultures, likewise, hegemonic framings of these edge spaces abound (as will be discussed further in the next chapter and throughout this volume). Indeed, the very terms ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ inherently describe a hierarchical relationship, one that threads throughout ICH practices no less than through society at large.

Inherent in the context of our inquiry, then, is the socially constructed use of the past in the present (cf. Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge 2000: 11) with all the attendant power relations of the society, or societies, by which it is constructed. Of course, to many of the insiders at Tom Bawcock’s Eve, whether the event can be considered heritage, ICH, or anything other than ‘Tom Bawcock’s Eve’ is likely irrelevant. Although in principle, at least, the event may be said to fall within UNESCO’s definition of ICH (as articulated in the ICHC), as has frequently been observed this does not imply any particular self-consciousness on the part of those practising it, until it is actually listed (and becomes a ‘metacultural product’ (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004)); nor did these practices suddenly come into being in 2003 with the inscription of the ICHC, as has been noted not least by folklorists and anthropologists. Traditional cultural practice as ‘just something we do’, enfolded into the everyday activities of life (cf. Robertson 2012), may not always be labelled as heritage – nor even may its ‘pastness’ be foremost in the mind of its practitioners – but may still be profoundly and strongly valued as such by those who consider themselves its owners. The identity expressed via the practice may be a Mousehole identity, a Cornish identity, a familial one, an event organiser’s one, or all of these. Indeed, the scale at which the ICH is practised in our case studies (e.g. village, town, region) varies in terms of the extent to which it can be seen as an expression of the minority cultural identity more broadly. It may be that ICH and the culture broadly intersect, as in Livonian; that local (town or village level) practices can be distinct from minority culture, while being part of the same ecosystem, in Cornwall; or that the ICH is common across the culture but performed locally at the village level, as in Frisian; with, of course, variations between individuals as to what particular identity is being performed. And a more important element than a metaculturalised ‘ICH’ from the perspectives of people in Mousehole and other places like it might be one that relates to the practice’s broader social, cultural, and economic context, which affects the values, social dynamics, and resources that go along with it. As well as the resilience of the ICH itself, then, at stake are the nature of the social relations that interconnect with it (see Chapter 1). These can provide the basis for leveraging the benefits of ICH in a way that is inclusive but appropriate, and the possibility of positive, sustainable cultural and social development.

In this volume, we build on the body of work within critical heritage studies, and related disciplines such as folklore, that attends to structural power and privilege and that considers ICH increasingly as distinct from its UNESCO context (albeit while acknowledging the discursive dominance of the ICHC) (e.g. Hafstein 2018; Stefano 2016; Stefano, Davis & Corsane 2012). Unlike many critiques, however, the research in this volume does not respond to the ICHC itself; rather, it explores a less frequently discussed aspect of ICH – less prominent in part *because of* the limited discursive possibilities created by the dominance of the ICHC. Rather than rehearsing again the benefits and challenges of the ICHC as applied to our particular contexts, we de-centre ICH within UNESCO as the object of inquiry, while acknowledging its role in shaping knowledge and policy by taking the ICHC definition of ICH as the basis for discussion. And although we focus on ICH, we are less interested in practices *per se*, since the social context of the ICH as much as the practice itself will help us better understand different perspectives. Instead, we take as our starting point the ambiguity of these marginalised European contexts, and ask what the plurality of majority and minority individuals and organisations in a minority cultural space might mean for its ICH. We accordingly focus on live cultural events linked to past practices in a national minority cultural space – with interest in the most invested insider to the accidental tourist but crucially (an area that is much neglected) also including those who fall in between. We thus seek to tread a balance between the ICHC and everyday socio-cultural contexts. Valdemar Hafstein has described ICH as a ‘diagnosis’ for post-industrial societies in need of a ‘cure’ from UNESCO experts (2015, 2018); a cure that is, crucially, ‘not without its side effects’ (2018: 157). The chapters in this volume seek both to better understand the ‘anatomy’ of the patient and so to prescribe preventative measures that may help mitigate the need for a visit to the doctor at all – or perhaps to enable minoritised cultures themselves to assess the risks and benefits of doing so. The inquiry is thus on the discursive object of ICH but not its governance, while acknowledging the inextricability of UNESCO from the academic and policy discourse around ICH (discussed further in Chapter 1).

ICH in European national minority contexts, then, sits somewhat uneasily at several crossroads: invisible yet hyper-visibly ‘othered’; part of the majority cultural space but separate within it; boundaryless yet boundaryed. There is an AHD that challenges and is challenged by new conceptions and ownership of ICH, in which European national minorities variously do or do not feature; and traditional cultural practices that may or may not be seen in the context of heritage or identity at all by those who practise them (yet who are arguably those whose experiences matter the most in a social justice perspective). This book focuses on the intersections of these crossroads, and in so doing charts a path between notions of heritage from critical, popular, and policy perspectives of what is needed to safeguard ICH in national minority contexts, within the context of the social relations that are inextricable from them. This ground-up perspective allows us to surface broader dynamics, and so to ask what happens to the ICH of the national minorities who historically occupied these geographical and economical peripheries, in light of their becoming increasingly attractive to tourists, holiday homeowners, and permanent incomers for work

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or ‘escape’ to the rural idyll; a plural ecosystem sometimes accompanied by tense social relations amidst jostling for space, resource, and voice. Dorothy Noyes has suggested that ‘The most important arenas for recognition, participation, and dignity remain those at the human scale in which bodies encounter one another and actions excite and demand answering action: where responsibility cannot be deferred, deflected, or denied’ (2015: 172). This is the scale at which we direct our inquiry.

### **About this book**

Our focus, then, is on examples of live cultural events linked to past practices in a national minority cultural space, incorporating the events’ broader social contexts. Although none happen to be inscribed under the ICHC, all arguably fall within its criteria for the definition of ICH. There are of course many different arenas in which ICH is practised and performed, all of which will vary in terms of how these dynamics play out; but such events are an apt place to study the intersections and interactions we have described, since they can be ‘a focal point for the merging of local and global narratives, and as an occasion when, and a space where, relations between global, national, regional, and local levels are discussed, negotiated, and, perhaps, redefined’ (Selberg 2006: 298; see also e.g. Clopot & McCullagh 2020; Picard & Robinson 2006); as places ‘for the making, unmaking and remaking of group identities’ (Kockel et al. 2020: 2) yet constituting, as Hansen describes them, an ‘important element in the indication of spatial affiliation’ (2004: 29).

Focusing on one or more of the case study contexts (Cornwall, Frisia, Livonian areas), each chapter applies a different lens to explore the core theme of majority and minority interplay through, and engagement in, national minority ICH. This book is underpinned by a dataset collected during a European Joint Programming Initiative on Cultural Heritage (JPICH)-funded research project, *Revoicing Cultural Landscapes: Narratives, Perspectives, and Performances of Marginalised Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2021–2023), or *Re:voice*.<sup>1</sup> The project grew from JPICH’s prompt to consider ‘How do different groups understand, experience and value heritage?’ and the observations this question inspired within our national minority settings. The diversity of the project team (which comprised individuals who identify as members of the respective national minority culture and those who do not) facilitated an interdisciplinary approach, and the chapters in this volume draw from a range of disciplines, including sociolinguistics, cultural geography, narrative studies, politics, event studies, and creative practice. As such, they offer a kaleidoscopic lens on the cultural landscape, with insights across a range of domains, drawing from the dataset from all three contexts.

Part I of this book, *Contexts*, considers some of the broader issues at play. In Chapter 1, Hodsdon elaborates on the contexts and questions described above and sets out the conceptual framework of this book, including what is meant by ‘revoicing’. In Chapter 2, Moenandar, Moran-Nae, and Hodsdon address the much-discussed notion of ICH ‘community’ in the context of the approach and findings of this book, arguing that different perspectives on what sort of community is being described co-exist both within and between individuals at any

one time. In the final chapter of this Part, Koreinik and Hodsdon consider how heritage discourse can contribute to revoicing, suggesting that both critical and appreciative (also called ‘positive’) modes of discourse analysis can be a fruitful means of both understanding and amplifying how minoritised ICH is positioned with respect to the majority.

Part II, *Analyses*, considers the interplay of majority and minority via a number of case studies. Section 1 focuses on different manifestations of *Voices*. First, in Chapter 4 Hodsdon and Moenandar present an analysis of how Cornish ICH events have been portrayed in the media, finding a range of presentations from erasure to exaggeration of difference, and offer a model of heritage mediation as a tool for analysis and self-reflection. In Chapter 5, Ernštreits, Kļava, Vaivade, Vītola, Ozoliņa, Pajusalu, and Balodis consider the Livonian language as ICH, suggesting that, in this critically endangered context, rather than language being a means of transmitting ICH, ICH can also be a vehicle for transmitting language, an understanding that presents both challenges and opportunities for the involvement of the majority in both ICH and language preservation. Chapter 6 also considers language, as Zijlstra, Aardema, and Moenandar ask how both Frisian and non-Frisian attendees of Frisian theatre performances construct their identities in relation to the ICH, the language, and their sense of belonging. Section 2 approaches the central theme via the notion of *Spaces*. In Chapter 7, Willett sees ICH ecosystems as complex adaptive assemblages, and analyses them in this light to consider what sorts of world-making are involved by all those within the assemblage, and what this might mean for the ICH’s futures. Chapter 8 takes the physical landscape as the context for considering majority–minority dynamics, and Vītola, Ozoliņa, Hodsdon, Koreinik, and Vaivade analyse the semiotic landscape in Livonian regions of Latvia and Estonia to consider both locals’ and incomers’ perspectives on the cultural presence (or absence) of Livonian signs, and what these mean in terms of a distinctively Livonian cultural landscape. In Chapter 9, Frears and Hodsdon consider how event insiders and outsiders use, move around, and interact in the towns of Padstow and Penzance in Cornwall during the events of May Day and Golowan respectively. In the final empirical Section 3, authors consider more explicitly the *Negotiations* that can take place around ICH events between majority and minority, or insiders and outsiders in an event context. In Chapter 10, Hodsdon, Ozoliņa, and Zijlstra use normative and non-normative elements of ICH events to explore how outsiders evaluate, monitor, and calibrate their positionality and behaviour in an unfamiliar context, arguing that given the potential for even a small faux pas to entrench existing divisive narratives, a sensitive outsider awareness of the cultural space they are entering is paramount. Chapter 11 takes its cue from the ubiquity of filmmaking in these cultural contexts, and Monk, Tattersall, and Santi focus on the history of the audio-visual archive of Padstow May Day in Cornwall over the last century and more up to the present, to consider how outsider filmmakers’ positionality can have impact far beyond their own relationship with the insiders whose heritage they seek to document, and how the changing nature of capturing archive presents opportunities for revoicing how it is shared and safeguarded. Finally, in Chapter

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12 Semley and Hodsdon use stakeholder theory to analyse how event organisers across all three contexts can negotiate external forces – positive and negative – to retain ownership of their event while ensuring its continued resilience.

Part III offers two chapters by way of bringing together the preceding discussion and laying the foundation for future research. Chapter 13 takes the findings from the dataset from four European countries and extends it into two contrasting non-European contexts as a first step in applying the inquiry globally. In it, Ginoza, Te Maro, and Tweed reflect, in conversation with Hodsdon, on their own contexts of Okinawa (Japan) and Aotearoa (New Zealand) respectively – a conversation that suggests the themes and findings here have much to offer in other contexts beyond those from which the data were derived. Finally, in Chapter 14 the editors share examples of revoicing in practice from the case study contexts, reflect on the findings of this book both within and outside the ICHC, outline how revoicing can offer a practical, adaptive framework to safeguard ICH and advance positive social relations, and suggest the limitations and opportunities for future investigation and practice offered by the research that gave rise to this book.

### Note

- 1 Detail on the event case studies can be found in Appendix I, and on the methodology and dataset in Appendix II.

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**Part I**

**Contexts**



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# 1 Revoicing intangible cultural heritage

*Laura Hodsdon*

Post-industrial regions at the margins of European nations are often places where tourists, holiday homeowners, resident newcomers for work, lifestyle and retirement, local people with longstanding familial, cultural, and social connections to the cultural space, and many other all interact. This interaction takes place in a cultural ecosystem that can be distinctive from (but also an integral part of) the national majority. As described in the Introduction, this places European national minorities and their intangible cultural heritage (ICH) at an uncertain place at a number of crossroads to do with past and present identities and the way they are performed through, and constructed by, heritage. In this chapter, I set out the conceptual framework arising from this observation, and the approach that underpins this book.

## **Routes or roots? Locating European cultural heritage**

Europe consists of many-layered cultural landscapes, agglomerations of centuries of migration, movement, identities, and cultures. These have shaped a society that Appadurai has described as an ‘ethnoscape’; that is, ‘the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live’ (1990: 297). People move, temporarily or permanently, within and between nation states; the space in which cultural life is lived becomes, as Doreen Massey has described it, ‘an ever-shifting constellation of trajectories’ which ‘poses the question of our throwntogetherness’, a dynamic, time- and space-bound interaction in which ‘the chance of space may set us down next to the unexpected neighbour’ (2005: 151). Where ‘unexpected neighbours’ meet can become in-between spaces (Bhabha 1994), where processes and frameworks for forming and negotiating identities must adapt (Hall 1996). As has long been acknowledged, inquiries into expressions of identity and belonging must likewise adapt, and account for the different ways that cultural identities are forged in these diverse ethnoscaapes.

At the same time, this ever-reconstituting society does not mean that place-attachment and rootedness are obsolete (Nic Craith 2009; Robertson 2012; Morley 2001). People’s sense of place-belonging is not arbitrary, but linked to a myriad of social, cultural, and environmental factors, not all of which are transferable to other places. Although they are rarely if ever any longer their historic selves – and

even those selves are more likely to have been characterised by hybridity than any sort of monolithic uniqueness – bounded cultural spaces have not been erased, and the modern fluidity of societies co-exists with stability of place, territory, and rooted identity, which must be accounted for together (Amin 2004; Massey 2004). Likewise, culture can be transmitted great distances (Hafstein 2018) while remaining rooted in the environment that shaped it. While the connection of place and culture has become more complex, underpinning anchors (and other, new ones) still form the basis of individual and collective identity boundaries. There is an impulse to categorise others into the ‘in-group’ (those like ‘me’) and the ‘out-group’ (those ‘not like me’), according to social identity theory (Tajfel 1974). While individuals may belong to more groups than in the past, there are, still, groups, where ‘identities are constructed through, not outside, difference’, since ‘it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not [...] that the ‘positive’ meaning of any term – and thus its ‘identity’ – can be constructed’ (Hall 1996: 5). Eriksen vividly likens groups in this respect to ‘inverted refrigerators’ since ‘their purpose is to create warmth inside, but almost inadvertently, they thereby create outward coldness’ – and to create this they need ‘criteria for inclusion’ (Eriksen 2015: 6) or, of course, exclusion (see also Dixon 2001). It is to these ambiguously bounded spatial contexts, often geographically and economically marginalised, that many national minority cultures are linked.

Cultural identities, then, both minority and majority, both individual and collective, are complex nodal points where domains such as place, language, tradition, and belonging intersect. They are layered, shaped, and reshaped at spatial scales from the local to the global, and the plural and the bounded need not be mutually exclusive. For heritage, however, this complexity presents something of a paradox. If heritage and identity are closely imbricated (e.g. Lowenthal 1987), then heritage can logically be understood as *both* exclusive and potentially contested *and* plural, hybrid, and negotiable (cf. Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge 2000). On one hand, globalisation has unlocked a perspective where heritage can be said to have universal value (UNESCO 1972), and the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (the ‘Faro Convention’) can assert that ‘every person has the right to engage with the cultural heritage of their choice’ (CoE 2005) – where freedom *from* being prevented from doing so has the corollary of freedom *to* (see Zagato 2015). On the other, if social identity is formed via inter-group processes of inclusion and exclusion, then all heritage ‘belongs to someone and logically, therefore, not to someone else’ (Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge 2000: 24). As a result, as Smith puts it, ‘All heritage is dissonant and controversial, and what may be inclusive and comfortable to one person or community will always be exclusionary and discomfoting to another’ (Smith 2011: 70).

ICH is no less part of this identity-building complex than its tangible counterpart; indeed, it has the potential to be more so, since it cannot exist unless ‘sustained through the acts of people’ (Arizpe 2007: 381; see also Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004; Blake 2009). Who these people are and what they do is implicitly and explicitly delimited within the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) that introduced the term. The language of the

ICHC reflects this central role of people when it speaks of culture ‘bearers’, and although the meaning of the ‘communities, groups, and individuals’ who comprise these groups is much debated (e.g. Arizpe 2007; Blake 2009, 2019; Munjeri 2009), much of this debate has understandably focused on agency and status in relation to State Parties and other actors (cf. Hafstein 2012; Kuutma 2019). But in these shifting edge spaces, the jostling of throwtogetherness continues whether within or outside the metacultural (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004) discursive world of UN-ESCO, leading to bounded practices and performances of ICH where the ICHC framework has ‘ignited tradition bearers to defend their traditional trades and festive events against unwelcome participants or thievish appropriations’, that ‘bring forth unforeseen pain into social arrangements’ (Bendix 2022: 45). Not everyone, it seems, is free to participate in the cultural heritage of their choice – in terms of inter-group ethics if not of normative rights. There is a paradox of exclusive and inclusive *both* co-existing *and* cancelling one another out, underscored by wide agreement that there is no boundary line, but reliant for its definition upon the existence of that line.

### **Heritage ownership, performance, and participation**

Discussions about not only whose heritage it is but who can perform, practice, or participate in it can be viewed, then, in terms of a practical social ethics. The Faro Convention’s declaration of inclusivity is based on the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights’ statement that every individual is entitled to the ‘economic, social and cultural rights indispensable to his [sic] dignity and the free development of his personality’; and that ‘every individual is entitled to participate freely in the cultural life of the community’ (UN 1948). Whatever the liberal impetus behind this statement, in this context it does not account for complex, ambiguous inter-group power dynamics and their attendant inequalities, as are indeed more open in the ICHC, particularly given its aim in part to recognise the heritage of Indigenous and non-Western groups. Nor does it consider the social psychological processes by which identities are forged, and the existence of an authorised heritage discourse in which majority narratives have historically and continue to shape what counts as heritage (Smith 2006). And so as Mairéad Nic Craith has asked, although ‘in theory everyone is welcome to participate in the process of transmission’ of ICH, questions such as ‘how does one strike a balance between heritage as a resource for all Europeans and as something that properly belongs to, and remains controlled by, its communities of origin?’ are unavoidable (Nic Craith 2008: 67).

Commentators have addressed this question and others like it by interrogating some of the key concepts relevant to these shifts. The need to balance the fluidity of modern understandings of community, and its implications of porosity, with more bounded ones of cultural identity has led to discussion (see especially Adell et al. 2015) of different ways in which community boundaries’ porosity is negotiated, encompassing approaches such as a network model (Noyes 2006) or mutual recognition (Groth 2015), in search of understandings that ‘[engage] with social relationships in all their messiness’ (Waterton & Smith 2010: 5). And discussions

of belonging and identity have also been reframed to account for complex negotiations at the edges of group boundaries, including often in the context of in-migrant or ethnic minority groups (e.g. Lähdesmäki 2016; Whitehead et al. 2020; Vos & Eckersley 2022). These enriched understandings of how individuals negotiate the new neighbours with whom they are thrown together, to use Massey's terms, are vital in seeking to navigate these paradoxes.

Nevertheless, the extent and nature of the permeability between groups in the context of national minority ICH, alongside its implications for the ethical 'doing' of ICH itself, have been relatively little discussed. Centuries-long intermingling of majority and minority cultures has set up a hybridity alongside distinctiveness; categorisations of 'community' and 'culture-bearer' do not seem readily to describe the polyvocal social context described above; and the complex dynamics that form the social base, comprising relations between centres and peripheries, majorities and minorities, seem inseparable from the individual cultural practices that happen within them. Outsiders can enter minority cultural spaces without being aware of it; resident incomers may have no sense of their own positionality as outsiders within a cultural practice that conversely may be a deeply held expression of minority identity by those who feel ownership of it. How are we to consider terms like 'culture bearer' or 'community' in these plural contexts where identities are shifting and multiple and there may be no official, ethical, or discursive acknowledgement that the majority cultural identity and the minority cultural identity differ, however subtly? Navigating the specific social ethics and dynamics of interaction with national minority culture and its ICH requires, we suggest, a rich understanding of what it is like on the ground, including an analysis of the 'local' as a 'multi-sited field, taking into account 'different perspectives to contribute to our understanding of the social world by complicating simplicities' (Kuutma 2013: 41).

Analysis of ICH to varying extents within the discursive boundaries of the ICHC (something of a magnet, as Melis and Chambers (2021) have shown) has offered some insights into these nuanced dynamics. It has considered, for example, the interaction of all of these supra-national frameworks with national contexts (e.g. Nic Craith 2008); the meanings and scope of 'communities' in an ICH context (e.g. Adell et al. 2015; Blake 2019, 2009; Kearney 2009; Munjeri 2009; Urbinati 2011), the potential for commodification especially relating to issues of cultural property (e.g. Blake 2019; Lixinski 2013, 2020). Literature on these issues often unpicks the permeability of group boundaries only at their very edges, such as with respect to hosts and tourists (e.g. Burns & Novelli 2006; Picard & Robinson 2006). In-principle acknowledgement of porous boundaries often comes with little expansion on what the fuzziness of ICH communities' edges look like to the individuals positioned within and around them, and how diverse individuals' negotiations across these edges govern behaviour, attitudes, and inter-group relations. This is not only a speculative issue but also one that speaks to the heart of what it is to safeguard ICH. Kurin suggests that ICH cannot survive as such 'if it is appropriated by others who are not members of the community, whether they be government officials, scholars, artists etc' (2007: 12). But when does such participation equal appropriation, and when might it look more like allyship and contribute to

its resilience? What does (or could, or should) the ICHC notion of ‘transmission’ look like in these contexts (cf. Labadi 2011)? How can all those in these polyvocal contexts find out how to navigate their relation with the ICH and those who practise it, and so ensure the best possible conditions for its resilience? These questions are difficult to answer, since who this community is (and is not) in the context of the ethnoscape of ICH at the post-industrial margins of Europe that national minorities have historically, and continue to, inhabit, is still insufficiently understood. In considering ‘communities, groups and individuals’, Blake outlines a potential list of ‘relevant actors and stakeholders, beginning with those most closely associated with the heritage’ as comprising:

- Cultural and/or bearer communities
- Practitioner associations
- Local (non-bearer) communities and individuals
- NGOs
- Academic/scientific institutions (including museums)
- National artistic academies
- Local authorities
- Central and regional government agencies
- Private sector

(Blake 2019: 26)

In this volume, we consider such articulations of ICH actors as a start point, and look more closely at the spaces and connections between and within them: at the porous or impermeable edges that divide them; at the orientations and motivations that enable or impel people to cross them or not to; at the interactions and dynamics between them; and at the implications of these dynamics for the resilience of ICH within the sociological context in which they interact, and vice versa.

### **ICH and social relations**

In the wake of debate about what the ICHC does and does not allow ICH to be and do (and how to do it), there has been a relative lack of focus on minority cultures’ ICH as fully embedded in its socio-cultural contexts: on a lens that focuses not so much on the ICH practices themselves, but on the day-to-day experiences (including ICH) of people in places where European minority cultures are rooted. So we work with UNESCO’s definition of ICH to delimit and situate our inquiry – it is not only the framing generally used within heritage studies but is also intrinsic to the way that initiatives to do with living culture are being catalysed in regional and national policy. But, as described in the Introduction, we bypass debates that have tended to dominate research since the Convention’s inscription in 2003, instead focusing on what might be called the sociology of ICH. This remains under-theorised, as Meissner has pointed out (2018, 2021; see also Groth 2015), noting that UNESCO does not unpack the causal links of ICH to sustainable development and social cohesion (Meissner 2018). Development that is sustainable ‘meets the

needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (UN 1987): but without fully taking into account the pluralising demographic forces in marginalised European regions, there is an important lacuna in understanding how the resilience of these minority cultures, as expressed via their ICH, can be safeguarded into a socially cohesive, sustainable future. Here, we apply a lens onto the co-existent plurality and boundedness of European minority identity. Such a lens complements the ICHC and other instruments, by providing new understandings to articulate how ICH can be resilient (that is, how can the social conditions for people to practise it be resilient). In this volume, by drawing on a multi-country dataset of 300 interviewees spectating, participating in, organising, or stumbling across ICH events and other cultural practices, we focus on diverse perspectives of how ICH events are produced, performed, and engaged with, from being the focal point of a deeply held (minoritised) identity to a spontaneous 'day out', and everything in between.

Considering what would be involved in creating these social conditions for resilience is a vital piece of the jigsaw for minority cultures, whose ability to flourish in a majority context often remains tenuous. This is not conceptual but practical. Resources are frequently scarce. Cultures' ability to transmit ICH 'vertically' to future generations is fragile, and defining the ICH ecosystem as constituted of quasi-essentialised 'culture bearers' is potentially to overlook this aspect of demographic flux. Aspirations of social and economic mobility lead to out-migration, and escapist imaginaries fuel outsider in-migration. There is a future scenario in which European peripheries are so changed that there may be no one left to practise an ICH. In such a situation, of course, one might ask: what is the value of safeguarding in any case? The assumption of heritage as something that should inherently be preserved is one feature of authorised heritage discourse (DeSilvey 2017; Smith & Campbell 2017), and as Melis and Chambers suggest, 'If a certain practice no longer has meaning and certain effects in a society, then in keeping with the definition of intangible cultural heritage as something living, it is legitimate that it might come to an end' (2021: 12). This may in some cases prove to be the ethical approach. Or, many practices will become hybrid, implied indeed in the notion that ICH is living, not preserved – although crucial here is the ability to remain fully conscious of the forces that give rise to such hybridity, given the potential for some voices to speak louder than others in shaping these new forms. While the performance and practice of ICH can work on a wider social stage as a means of mediating societal relations, it might also be that in this potentially fraught politics of belonging, heritage is not the most suitable vehicle for societal cohesion. As Waterton asks, if 'confining possession to some while excluding others is the *raison d'être* of most heritage' then 'Is it in the nature of heritage to be inclusive? Are debates about the nation's heritage the natural spaces in which to look for answers to combat racism, reconcile differences and overturn cultural, political and social exclusion?' (Waterton 2010: 67). Here is where the particular ambiguities of ICH in these distinctive regional contexts – as identity practice but also social performance; as transmitted over generations but as happening in a moment in time; as a site where identities can be not only expressed but also created; as lacking people

to practise it in places whose populations are growing; as heritage but often also as participatory art or culture – might lead us to answer ‘possibly’.

### **Minority cultures, majority cultures, and identity at the margins of Europe**

I suggest, then, that the circumstances of European national minority cultures’ ICH remain under-studied. European nations are often perceived as culturally homogeneous and there have been pleas to pay better attention to ‘old’ minorities (e.g. Grote 2006; Tschernokoshewa 2008; Xanthaki 2019). As described in the Introduction, our perspective in this book is on the ‘human scale’ (Noyes 2006) of those practising ICH associated with ‘old minorities’ in Europe, rather than the macro scale of European policy or imaginary. Hertz has noted the need for a critical approach when considering just who is the ‘bottom’ in a bottom-up approach (2015), and it is not our intention to arrive at any sort of definitive description of this micro level. Rather, bearing in mind the multiply constituted ethnoscape, we view the context in which minority European ICH exists as an ecosystem (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004; Hafstein 2012) to acknowledge that ICH practices are one facet of society, and that group membership is interlinked, shifting, and plural rather than separate, static, and bounded. We thus take into account, first, its interconnected social diversity, taking Massey’s understanding of individuals’ space- and time-bound throwntogetherness as its location. Second, we also consider practices and performances that are not considered to be ‘ICH’ but which our interviewees frequently linked to their day-to-day experiences, such as arts, commercial events, leisure activities, language, social or economic issues, as well as links to broader political and cultural identity constructs. We consider this ecosystem holistic, insofar as it comprises multiple actors across multiple domains, all of whom are inter-related with other systems, structures, and identities.

‘Outsider’ participation in ICH has most often been considered in relation to tourists, whose presence in increasingly large numbers in these post-industrial rural contexts – with their ‘unspoiled’ natural environments and relative sparsity of urban centres – has a profound impact on these regions culturally no less than economically. Tourists are indeed vital to consider in the sociology of minority ICH. But there are many other actors whose relationality to the minority culture and its ICH is often neglected. These might include: a resident newcomer who engages proactively with the minority culture of a place (or wishes to); temporary residents in the form of holiday homeowners, students, or migrant workers, who may engage with the culture to any extent from deep interest to not at all; cultural tourists whose engagement with place goes beyond the authorised discourse; minority culture people of colour or others at the intersection of minoritised identities that do not fit neatly into the ‘majority’; or multiple other combinations of associations with place and identity. At the fuzzy edges of the such categories as offered by Blake (2019), then, as quoted above, are therefore multiple actors whose positions and perspectives nevertheless have a significant bearing on the ethics and practicality of their relation to the ICH.

Two groups in this indicative list are notable by their frequent absence from ICH literature: resident incomers (from students to workers to retirees, as well as returnees who may have different understandings from those who have never moved away) and temporary ones (such as holiday homeowners or short-term visiting professionals). Both groups have potentially higher stakes in terms of their engagement or participation in local or regional ICH than do tourists. While presumably covered in Blake's descriptor 'local (non-bearer) communities and individuals' (2019: 26), the nuances of these actors' relationality with the ICH of the place they have come to, and their relationship to 'bearer communities', is not sufficiently understood. In both scenarios, there is a complexity for incomers who must 'come to terms with discourses and practices of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion at play' (Antonsich 2010: 649). It is here where the distinction between ICH – *as* heritage – and other more explicitly participatory forms of cultural or creative practice also becomes vital, due to the different 'grammars of inclusion' (Eriksen 2015) that they evince. Boundary negotiations and their frequently contested nature in the context of often-unequal power relations provide a compelling ethical imperative for better understanding how these dynamics transfer into a heritage context.

Resident newcomers' experiences have been explored via notions such as elective belonging (Savage 2014), which describes place-attachment and identity through the process of social and cultural integration. Likewise, rural mobilities literature has considered ways in which outsiders become a part – more or less smoothly – of new, often distinctive, cultural contexts (e.g. Cloke, Goodwin & Milbourne 1998). Incomers, then, occupy a somewhat liminal space, mediated as these literatures attest by factors such as motivation for moving, previous place connections, social class, and the like. Work on belonging indicates that moving into a region requires multiple intrinsic and extrinsic negotiations: greater belonging is linked to a feeling that this is a place where 'people like me' live (Savage 2014), and increases with length of residence (Antonsich 2010), for example. Processes of inclusion or exclusion in socio-cultural life can become difficult: as Antonsich notes, 'boundary discourses and practices that separate 'us' from 'them' are indeed at the very essence of any politics of belonging' (2010: 649). These politics of belonging may relate to any number of characteristics bound up with broader discourses of socio-spatial exclusion (Cresswell 1996), but can also converge around minority cultural identities (e.g. Drakakis-Smith, Day & Davis 2010). The stakes here vary: students, or workers on temporary contracts, for example, may have less to gain or lose, as will retirees seeking solitude who have no desire to integrate themselves in social life – although all are still potential actors with respect to the ICH. Others, moving permanently into a place for work or other reasons, may be more invested. While many incomers, then, over time and negotiation, can become integrated into a place, this is always bound up with the politics of belonging, even when these are experienced positively (Willett 2023) and dependent to some extent on 'mutual recognition' by those in the place to which they have moved.

If permanent resident incomers find themselves negotiating their place, then even more so do temporary or seasonal incomers. Dykes and Walmsley suggest (2015)

that second homeowners are understudied and when they are considered, it is often in the context of economic policies or urban planning (although these are related to ICH, as seen in the chapter by Frears and Hodsdon in this volume, for example). Dykes and Walmsley suggest that this lack of attention is because second homeowners are generally categorised as residents (2015: 95), although elsewhere they are attributed the same characteristics as tourists (e.g. Bendix 2022; Hall & Muller 2004). Ambiguity piles on ambiguity: in this in-between space where cultures meet, second homeowners themselves are ‘a kind of “in between” – neither tourist nor permanent resident nor both at the same time’ (Aronsson 2004: 82; Dykes & Walmsley 2015). But, just as with the in-movement of permanent residents, the socio-spatial impact of this group can be positively but also negatively felt. Where there is a touristic paradigm at play, there is a risk that an outsider stance seeking ‘escape’ or rural tranquillity may have particular expectations about the culture it encounters, such as Bendix describes in the context of French legislation on ‘sensory heritage’ (2022). And whatever the intent of individuals, there are broader implications for resource and infrastructure, such as impact on housing stock. This can result in discord between those disenfranchised by this social dynamic and those whose social and economic capital enables them to benefit from it. This potential for social division underscores the importance of positive social relations as a factor contributing to the resilience of the ICH itself – and of potentially leveraging the inherently social nature of ICH in turn to improve those social relations. Economic impact on the social can clearly transfer to the cultural, and so the idea that there is an ethical (if not legal) ‘right’ to free participation on the part of individuals whose place in this sometimes fraught constellation is likely to be bound up with privilege and power that has real, direct consequences on others, is less than clear.

In these polyvocal ecosystems, then, are socio-cultural actors whose multiplicity makes even the more nuanced categories of ‘tourist’, ‘permanent resident’, and ‘temporary resident’ insufficient. This constellation is therefore better conceived as a spectrum of perspectives and identities across majority and minority cultures, rather than a binary dichotomy across broad-brush categories such as majority/minority, community/non-community, host/guest, bearer/non-bearer. Although individuals’ places on the spectrum shift diachronically as they negotiate and construct their own place within it, what is more important for this inquiry is the *synchronic* co-existence of a diversity of perspectives with relation to the ICH, so as to study the interplay of those perspectives. Rather than studying longer-term identity projects, then, we observe the more everyday practices (Garbutt 2009) of engagements with ICH. In keeping with this more performative lens, the broad categories of ‘majority and minority’ – useful to demarcate the existence of a marginalised culture within a national context – are also articulated as ‘outsider and insider’ to express relation to individuals’ positions with respect to the ICH (cf. Relph 1976). Not only do these positions likewise sit in a shifting, non-binary continuum (although there may be times when there is a clearer dichotomy, such as a national organisation making decisions that impact local practice), but the association between them is not fixed or quantified but relational and dynamic (see Dixon et al. 2020).

The relation here is not so much one in search of a typology (such as that of Gieling, Vermeij & Haartsen (2017)) nor a definition; but, drawing on Creswell, a contingent relationality underpinned by power and identity:

When I use terms such as dominant and dominated I do not intend to suggest that there are two mutually exclusive groups of people in the world who fall into one or the other of these categories. I do mean to suggest, however, that in given contexts we can make judgments concerning who has power over whom.

(Cresswell 1996)

It is this complex picture of inter-group relations that we explore in this volume, all the time oriented towards better understanding how these polyvocal ecosystems impact on, and how they can potentially benefit, minority ICH. Notions of belonging, place-attachment, and identity – much explored in relation to the in-between space at hand – provide the ethical rationale and theoretical background for this exploration. While the in-between space may yield hybrid identities and practices, this cultural context is not a neutral free-for-all, where individual rights and a multicultural utopia (cf. Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge 2000: 123) enable any and allcomers to participate in the ‘cultural life of their choice’. Or rather, they *could* do so legally: but *should* they, as ethical social actors? If they should, then *how* should they? And how can they know what this looks like? This focus on fuzzy social relations is missing from much discussion of ICH. But it could offer a more nuanced understanding of whether and how outsiders might contribute to safeguarding an ICH that is not ‘theirs’ into the future. And in keeping good social relations in mind, we acknowledge UNESCO’s hope that ICH can lead to ‘social cohesion’ but explicitly engage with the reality that, in many contexts of minority ICH, broader frictions within the socio-political sphere cannot be separated from ICH practices that are culturally imbricated in that context. This does not, however, mean they have to be divisive or contested, if majority and minority actors can be aware of their positionalities and confident in the ways they relate to those of others. In thinking about good social relations, then, we draw on the notion of inter-group contact, a process relating to social identity theory in which positive interaction between an in- and out-group can reduce stereotypes (Allport 1954; Brown & Hewstone 2005; Valentine 2008). For an individual majority-culture resident incomer, how might they navigate their encounter with minority ICH appropriately, ethically, and for its (and broader societal) benefit? For an individual minority-culture local wishing to be inclusive but fearing the erasure of their cultural identity, how might they position themselves and their ICH inclusively while shaping boundaries as to the extent of that inclusivity? Revoicing can articulate how societal polyvocality could, or should, impact a minority culture’s ICH; and thus enable ICH to both shape and be shaped by positive social relations by all actors in the ecosystem.

In exploring these sorts of questions, then, as well as theoretical underpinnings we are also guided by relevant practical, ethically grounded concepts that come from contexts seeking to foster positive inter-group interaction. Where an outsider

finds themselves in a cultural space that is not their own, concepts such as appropriation are helpful (e.g. Baird Jackson 2021); but we might also think about ‘safe’ spaces, which here we might recast simply as ‘insider’ spaces (Puwar 2004), with the acknowledgement that there may be practices that are not ‘for’ outsiders to be present in. The challenge here for the outsider, of course, is navigating if, when, and how they might move appropriately into that space (cf. Noyes 2003). As one moves along the continuum towards insiderness, the idea of allyship becomes useful: how might a resident incomer, for example, amplify or make space for the voice of the minority without speaking for them? Orientation to the ICH itself might therefore reflect the insider–outsider spectrum, with hybridity representing a high level of insiderness (integration as an event organiser, for example); engaged allyship falling somewhere in the middle (e.g. volunteering at, but not seeking to shape, an event), and positive inter-group contact falling towards the outsider end (perhaps not attending an event at all). For all, self-reflexivity around various types of privilege can be a key way in which appropriate cultural competence might be cultivated, as outsiders encounter insiders’ ICH practices, and consciously reflect on and adjust their behaviour accordingly. The structural privilege of majority over minority identity is clearly central here, but it is also important to remain mindful that these act intersectionally. Crucially, the extent of privilege for everyone will vary depending on the situation (Jones & Abes 2013). By being appropriately oriented, actors are best placed to effect societal change, since, as Max Liboiron (in a related context) puts it, ‘Orientations, which come out of obligations, mean that you are facing in a particular direction with a specific horizon of possible action before you. Orientations are the condition of possibility for some futures and not others’ (2021: 155).

### **Revoicing intangible cultural heritage**

In this book, we suggest that ‘revoicing’ is one means of creating the conditions of possibility for resilient marginalised ICH and positive social relations, complementing existing governance frameworks. The notion of voice is imbricated in various ways with plurality and power; for us, the ‘voices’ are those of the often-silenced or erased minority; but they are also the voices from across the ecosystem that join them. Revoicing seeks to reflect these polyglossic realities (Bakhtin 1986): metaphorically, as rebalancing the different contributing components of a societal ‘choir’, bringing out different colours and characters, finding unexpected resonances between different notes, and potentially revealing that the choir is larger and more diverse than might be expected – if only we listen carefully and amplify appropriately. This may acknowledge that different understandings of the cultural context can co-exist without the need for direct negotiation, such as in overlapping interpretations of the type of community and the nature of its boundaries, porous or otherwise (as discussed by Moenandar, Moran-Nae & Hodsdon, this volume). Likewise, though, it involves amplification of minority voices: who is allowed to speak, whether and when they can be heard (cf. Spivak 1988), who has agency, and how minorities compete with other voices to establish the value and meaning of

their cultural heritage. Where the monoglossic has held sway, an authorised heritage discourse shaped by majority voices can have profound effects on how ICH is perceived at a national level, as Laurajane Smith, Emma Waterton and others have variously shown (e.g. Smith 2006; Smith 2011; Smith & Waterton 2009; Waterton 2010). Vital though critical approaches that uncover power relations are, it has been argued (Martin 2004) that an analytical approach that encompasses discursive change could provide a useful means of amplifying minority agency, as Koreinik & Hodsdon explore (this volume). Within these broad premises of plurality and amplification, even when spatial or discursive elements of ICH are emergent and potentially hybrid, with potential porosity between groups, the conditions of possibility for ethical outsider engagement are not infinitely open.

Where majority narratives are deployed in mediating ICH in public discourse – an arena in which minority and majority can seem more binary than in other contexts – the result can be either to erase or to ‘other’ the ICH, neither of which represents a balanced stance towards a contemporary living culture. Those creating such discourses who wish to advance positive social relations might usefully reflect on the ontologies underpinning their mediation and self-reflexively orient themselves accordingly (as Hodsdon & Moenandar argue, this volume). Taking a more literal conception of ‘voice’, language is notably not ICH in its own right but is considered to act as a tool for its transmission (e.g. Nic Craith 2009): but conversely, ICH may itself be a pathway to the resilience of critically endangered languages. When vertical intergenerational transmission is all-but halted, horizontal transmission using ICH as an accessible, inclusive vehicle may be a way to enable increasingly greater numbers of people literally to give voice to the language and so sustain it in to the future (as Ernštreits, Klava, Vaivade, Ozoliņa, Vītola, Pajusalu & Balodis argue, this volume). In a more resilient minority linguistic context, being open to hybrid identities while retaining a distinctive core demonstrates the powerful role of language in shaping ICH communities, emphasising that crossing those boundaries is performative more than it is essentialised (as Zijlstra, Aardema & Moenandar show, this volume).

Marginal spaces are shaped by multiple identities and levels of connection to the territory, regional or local. As Willett argues (this volume), post-industrial spaces are complex affective assemblages whose location on the national periphery requires them to balance their rich cultural heritages with opportunities for connections beyond the regional afforded by interaction with ‘core’ assemblages. This balance is not always easy: national cultures’ hegemonic narratives (Smith 2006) can lead to marginalisation of the minority culture resulting in lack of resource, fragmentation, and endangerment (MacDonald 2013). For national minority cultures, ICH can in this respect function as a (sometimes literal) signpost to their presence and the relation of that presence to a cultural landscape. Since landscapes are not neutral but overlaid by the traces of those who have inscribed identities upon them, there is a potential role for all who have place-connection – whether permanent or temporary resident, belonging to the minority culture or not – to collectively forge a region’s semiotic landscape in a way that is integrative of its past while reflectively forging its emerging, plurivocal future, as Vītola, Ozoliņa,

Hodsdon, Vaivade & Koreinik argue (this volume). In emergent realities such as these can be seen in-between spaces, that ‘provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself’ (Bhabha 1994: 2). The spatial affordances of ICH events are key factors in shaping their physical and affective nature, and may contain overlapping, unresolved experiences as well as hybrid ones, representing the separate but contemporaneous existence of insider and outsider cultural pathways, manifest in different modes of navigating an event within the same space (Fears & Hodsdon, this volume).

Minority ICH is not, however, a free-for-all: in these complex, throwntogether spaces, the perspectives of different actors come into dialogue, and in that exchange lies the potential for contestation but also self-reflective and positive negotiations that underpin positive social relations. Orientation towards the ICH remains contingent, with ethical implications for inter-group interaction, particularly on the part of those with structural power. In the national imaginary, although the minority culture may have added its voice to majority-forged narratives and discourses, as well as created its own, it may just as often be silenced by, or misaligned with, majority narratives constructed by an ‘othering’, potentially dissonant, gaze. The role of those creating the narratives is therefore paramount, and those who seek to orient themselves towards ICH appropriately and ethically could benefit from not only reflecting on their positionality, but from actively seeking ways to leverage it so that a basis for ethical collaboration can be reached, as Monk, Tattersall, and Santi argue in relation to filmmaking (this volume). At the event itself, micro-behaviours which comprise ‘appropriate’ behaviour in a social context (Goffman 1956 [2022], 1963) may be both normative (such as craft stalls, bands, or burger vans) and cross-cultural (esoteric or local traditions such as paganesque rituals). These can make it difficult for an outsider to navigate appropriate behaviour in ICH with which they are not familiar – indeed, to know whether they are even in a situation when such navigation might be called for. But seemingly innocuous moments can have profound implications on inter-group dynamics and social relations, as well as individual socio-cultural capital. A popular festival – food, music, literature – has a normative ‘grammar of inclusion’ (Eriksen 2015) but, as Hodsdon, Ozoliņa & Zijlstra suggest (this volume), for the individual seeking to act appropriately when entering a habitus that is both distinct from and the same as their own, awareness of the distinctive, non-normative cultural context is necessary; for the insider, the provision of information can help to smooth the way to more positive interactions. This self-reflective positionality is a potential means of redressing the balance between different perspectives. Likewise, where organisers have to balance the financial and human resource implications of delivering resilient events, a better understanding of the dynamics between majority and minority stakeholders and their salience in shaping event delivery and resilience longer term could help balance outsider organisational support with maintaining minority ownership (Semley & Hodsdon, this volume).

The concept of revoicing thus aims to lay the ground for a more sociological conception of safeguarding ICH in the context of the polyvocal ecosystems of national minority cultures in Europe. How revoicing works in practice – whether outsiders are best positioned as burgeoning insiders potentially enabling horizontal (across group) as well as vertical (across generations) transmission; as temporary or ‘honorary’ bearers; as vocal allies; or as keeping a respectful distance – will not be a one-size-fits-all approach (although there are many commonalities that could make these approaches useful even outside of a European context (see Ginoza, Te Maro & Tweed, this volume)). It will require not only outsiders but also insiders to acquire ‘heritage literacy’ (Dibbits 2020, 2017 – see Hodsdon, Ernštreits, Moenandar & Koreinik, this volume) – the capacity to make self-reflexive, conscious choices in navigating which pathway to take and orienting themselves appropriately, from basic awareness, to understanding, to behaviour and (in)action. Revoicing is not prescriptive but adaptive. By seeking better understandings of the sometimes fragile, plural ecosystem of European national minority cultures’ ICH; using these understandings to identify practical means of revoicing at a local level; and applying this broader sociological approach alongside legal and political ones, it is our hope that this volume offers insights to safeguard and celebrate national minority ICH and positive social relations for all.

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## 2 ‘By the community, for the community’

Boundary narratives, boundary work,  
and intangible cultural heritage

*Sjoerd-Jeroen Moenandar, Bridget Moran-Nae,  
and Laura Hodsdon*

To whom does intangible cultural heritage (ICH) belong? Ask the people involved in the events discussed in this volume, and they will often say ‘the community’, whether they see themselves as belonging to that community, or not. In fact, that question – am I part of this community or not? – often seems to be instigated by the mediation of ICH. Thus, when one stakeholder in the Golowan Festival (midsummer celebrations held in the Cornish town of Penzance) explains that the event is ‘by the community, for the community’ (K92), he is making a statement seemingly about its inclusivity, while also making clear that this does not include everyone. Meanwhile, a couple living in the village of Kollum, Frisia, ponder whether they really belong to the village community where the Frisian theatrical event they just participated in took place. After all, they are originally from the neighbouring province of Groningen. They conclude they at least somewhat do, having lived in the village for a long time, but then mention that their neighbours are ‘from the Hague and they’ll always be from the Hague [...], because of that they’re a bit outside the Kollum community’ (F9/F10). Apparently, coming from one of the larger cities in the western Netherlands, these neighbours have even less hope of truly becoming part of the community than the couple from a province that is at least as rural as Frisia. Finally, a man in Latvia acknowledges that there may be reasons for not considering himself part of a Livonian community, but ultimately rejects these: ‘I for one feel that I am Livonian. It’s true, I don’t speak the language, I don’t speak it, but I feel part of that community’ (L56). Tellingly, for him, the fact that he contributes to the maintenance of Livonian ICH is a decisive factor here (see Ernštreits et al. in this volume for the link between Livonian language and ICH). Actions, apparently, speak louder than words. All these respondents are being caught in the act of what has been called the ‘dirty work’ of ‘boundary maintenance’ which constitutes all communities (Crowley cited by Yuval-Davis 2006: 204). This ‘boundary work’ (Van der Waal 2022: 207) is ‘aimed at constructing belonging in particular ways to particular collectivities’, while at the same time those collectivities are ‘being constructed by [it] in very particular ways’ (Yuval-Davis 2006: 197). The examples show how boundary work can be messy and is often contradictory.

In this chapter, we look at community in the context of ICH as something that is constituted at the intersection of a heartfelt sense of belonging, and ‘dirty’ boundary work. Focusing on the ‘use rather than lexical meaning’ (Cohen 2007 [1985]: 12) of community, we consider how the concept is brought about through the discourse and actions of those who are involved in the ICH case studies. The term ‘community’ may mean many different things, depending on how it is used – and what kind of boundary work is demarcating it. Is it a community of origin, as implied in the idea that someone from the Hague can never truly belong in Kollum? Or, rather, as in the Livonian example, a community that is shaped by doing certain things, performing certain acts – but note that underlying the assertion of belonging by this respondent is another notion that threatens it, namely that this is rather a linguistic community, which would exclude him; and the fact that he twice repeats that he does not speak Livonian betrays, we feel, at least a mild anxiety about this. Is there maybe a strategic dimension to the fact that the Golowan respondent strongly stresses the communal aspect of his ICH (cf. Noyes 2006), but leaves undefined what demarcates this community? One could argue that the less strict the boundary work by which a community is constituted, the more inclusive that community becomes; yet even the mildest boundary work may be, at heart, strongly essentialist (e.g. when its implicit assumptions about belonging are nativist), while very strict boundary work may also be the promise of an opportunity (such as a community where, as long as you ‘do your bit’, you can belong) (cf. Sollor’s (1989) distinction between communities of descent and consent). In what follows, we review the notion of ‘community’, and consider some different types of community that might be at play in an ICH context. Then, we will analyse instances of boundary work in the mediation of ICH in Cornwall, Frisia, and Livonian areas in Latvia and Estonia. These are the aforementioned Golowan Festival, in Penzance, Cornwall; Padstow’s May Day, a centuries-old annual celebration with festive, highly ritualised processions; a series of activities around the Livonian language and culture in Latvia and Estonia such as a summer school and an annual folk festival; and theatre plays in Frisia (see Appendix 1 for more information on these events). Each of these instances is an example of minority ICH and can be seen as both expressions of smaller and larger European minority languages and cultures and as attempts to keep these alive. Our data consist of semi-structured interviews held with people involved in these instances of ICH, ranging from casual visitors to deeply involved volunteers and professionals (see Appendix 2 for an overview of these data and how they were gathered). While analysing these data, our aim is to consider how community boundary narratives are constructed by those involved in ICH, and to come to a better understanding of who we talk about when we talk about ICH communities.

### **Communities and boundaries**

In the examples we cited above, it is far from certain that every time the word ‘community’ is used it has the same meaning. As Waterton and Smith have argued, this is a term that has been ‘continually used, abused and reused’ in heritage and

has become 'so fundamental [it is] difficult to take issue with' but has also 'all too easily become an explanation or solution rather than "something to be explained"' (2010: 4–5). Consequently, both in everyday use and as an analytical concept in a variety of academic disciplines (Blake 2009: 51), it can signify anything from an enduring, complex societal entity to any random, temporal collective. This semantic blankness – or semantic excess, depending on one's perspective – also gives the word a certain attractiveness, since it provides 'a convenient conceptual haven, a location from which to sagely circumscribe potentially infinite webs of connection' (Amit and Rapport cited in Hazucha 2009: 229). However, as we already mentioned, communities do *not* extend infinitely, something already suggested by the term itself, which implies

two related suggestions: that the members of a group of people (a) have something in common with each other, which (b) distinguishes them in a significant way from the members of other putative groups. 'Community' thus seems to imply simultaneously both similarity and difference. The word thus expresses a relational idea: the opposition of one community to others or to other social entities.

(Cohen [1985] 2007: 12)

Thus, the boundary work that is both instigated by and constitutes a certain community is always double-edged, facilitating on the one hand 'cuddly' (Waterton & Smith 2010) interconnectedness and harmonious collectivity, but on the other setting up the frame where 'us' is divided from 'them' into in-groups and out-groups (Tajfel 1974): it always includes some, excluding others; it affords belonging, but never for all.

As such, boundary work happens in response to boundary experiences – moments where we realise what we are, by becoming aware of what we are *not*. Originally conceptualised within developmental psychology (cf. Bühler 1938), a boundary experience takes place when we encounter a situation, event, notion, or person that we perceive as more or less fundamentally *different* (Lengelle & Meijers 2015: 318). In this moment, a rupture opens between the similar and the not-similar (Lengelle & Meijers 2014: 67), and we are forced to reconsider what we see as *our* way of being (Weijers 2014: 26) – and with that, the community to which we belong, as we negotiate who and what does *not* belong to it. This reconsideration often takes place in the form of the construction, communication, or reconfiguration of a story – in short, in the form of narrative work (Gubrium & Holstein 2009: xvii), which allows us to make sense of the rupture (Lengelle & Meijers 2015) by giving meaning to the different actors, actions, and events involved in the boundary experience, and how these relate to each other (Moenandar & Huisman 2017: 176–177). Thus, boundary work sediments into a *boundary narrative* (Moenandar & Godioli 2022) in which the boundary experience is worked through. This narrative can posit a more inclusive sense of identity and community, encompassing that which was formerly considered to be different; but it may instead also reify the original boundary (Zittoun 2008: 165; Moenandar & Huisman 2017: 179); or indeed it may occupy

any position between these two poles as it renegotiates similarity and difference. However, whether or not it allows demarcations to shift after the encounter with difference, implied in any boundary narrative is a – newly established, or deeply rooted – community. That community always comes with its ‘grammar of inclusion’ (Eriksen 2015), a mechanism by which this process of articulating boundaries is regulated. Although the extent to which a given community is a coherent whole may be a ‘matter of degree’, and such a grammar may therefore be more or less strict, it is always there, ensuring that communities, as Eriksen vividly puts it, function like ‘inverted refrigerators’ and ‘create warmth inside, but almost inadvertently, they thereby create outward coldness’ (2015: 6).

The mediation (Gielen 2007) of ICH – the social process in which something is constructed as being of value as ICH – is an instance where this may come to the fore. ICH is an example of what Negri and Hardt (2009) call the *commons*: the natural and cultural resources that lie at the very heart of any community. Like other forms of the commons, such as language, knowledge, and information, members of the community continually contribute to its production, but may also draw on it for ‘expression, creativity, and art’ (Gielen & De Bruyne 2011). At the same time, however, the mediation of ICH often brings to the fore exactly who may contribute to and draw from it – and who not. Thus, members of a community may tap into their shared ICH when formulating boundary narratives that make sense of their boundary experience. Moreover, the mediation of ICH may be a boundary experience itself. In this chapter, then, we pay close attention to the grammars of inclusion implied in the boundary narratives told in the context of the instances of ICH mediation mentioned above. We will assess how these narratives shape, maintain and negotiate the communities that are both established by and embed the ICH. As we will show, the mediation of ICH indeed offers boundary experiences for our respondents, which are worked through in narratives that articulate – implicitly or explicitly – boundaries for who can belong to these three communities, which in turn are often pointed at as the owners of the ICH in question.

### ***Constructing heritage communities***

One of the earliest definitions of ‘heritage community’ can be found in the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, adopted in Faro in 2005: ‘people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations’ (article 2b). Here, a heritage community is open to anyone with this wish, an openness the Framework elsewhere defines as a right: ‘every person has a right to engage with the cultural heritage *of their choice*, while respecting the rights and freedoms of others’ (Council of Europe 2005; our emphasis). There is a potential tension between the individual and collective rights implied in this sentence (see Zagato 2015 for an exploration of the legal implications of this alongside the UNESCO 2003 Convention (hereafter ICHC)). There is, on the one hand, the individualistic notion that anyone who wishes to engage with a certain heritage may consider themselves part of the community it belongs to. On the other hand,

however, for certain communities, particular forms of participation in its heritage by outsiders may be contested or inappropriate. This may be especially germane in the context of minority communities, where the practice is often linked with the identity-shaping work of that culture more broadly, as a means of expressing and asserting its distinctiveness from the majority.

In the ICHC, this collective dimension received more attention. Here, the location of ICH is defined as 'communities, groups, and if applicable individuals', and the concept of the collective is not simply an appendix to contextualise ICH, but, rather, central to its very existence. Whether we can speak of ICH or not is 'dependent on the recognition by "communities, groups and individuals" who are continuously recreating it and to whom it provides a sense of community' (Blake 2009: 47). Thus, the community 'is placed at the centre of this Convention rather than the heritage itself and the safeguarding of ICH must take into account the wider human, social and cultural contexts in which the enactment of ICH occurs' (Blake 2009; see also Blake 2019). An expert meeting held in Tokyo in 2006 provided further definitions, including that of 'community' as 'networks of people whose sense of identity or connectedness emerges from a shared historical relationship that is rooted in the practice and transmission of, or engagement with, their ICH' (Blake 2009: 60).

By dint of their role in setting the scope and operations of normative international frameworks such as UNESCO's, 'heritage communities' are defined in such a way as to balance as inclusive a scope as possible with clarity as to their intention. The particular glosses and caveats that accompany the ensuing definitions, though, seem to foreground their inclusivity, rather than making explicit what they exclude. Yet, implicit in the definitions themselves is always something of a more tightly delineated group, suggested by culture bearers with a shared historical context. It is also important to keep in mind that the ICH at the core of these communities is framed as *heritage* rather than, say, art or culture. The former activates a frame of reference that is geared, often quite explicitly, to the kind of identity projects that are in need of – and establish – boundaries that are less, rather than more, porous.

We already noted that the second word of the term 'heritage community' treads a curious semantic line of encompassing so many meanings that it has become almost meaningless. What a community is, how it can be demarcated, and how it functions have been conceptualised in various ways in a variety of academic disciplines, such as sociology, pedagogy, or social anthropology, and in institutional contexts, such as regional, national, and international policy-making. These are summarised elsewhere (e.g. Adell et al. 2015; Alleyne 2002; Hazucha 2009; Waterton & Smith 2010); for our purposes, we conclude this section with brief outlines of four ways in which communities have been conceptualised throughout these disciplines, paying attention to the implied porosity of their boundaries in an ICH context, in order to illustrate some possible grammars of inclusion available.

One frequently evoked framing in a heritage context is Anderson's *imagined communities*, which can be linked to modern notions of heritage deriving from nation states' imperatives to shape clearly bounded identities (Anderson 1983; Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge 2000). As 'nation making instruments', these are

‘one means of [...] maintaining the potential political thrust of heritage making’ (Adell et al. 2015: 7). In one respect, that communities are ‘imagined’ is common sense: ‘all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even there) are imagined’ (Anderson 1983: 6). But the mechanisms of such imaginings activate other ideologies, connections, positionalities, such that the concept becomes a powerful tool to consider modes of identity formation that may align with an idealised, potentially essentialised, version of one’s fellow community members. As such it is highly exclusive, albeit paradoxically also inclusive in that its imagined nature means that anyone is free to do just that. We might see imagined communities as going hand-in-hand with (if not necessarily directly aligning with) a community of ‘descent’ (Sollors 1986), one more explicitly relating to more essentialised communities of ancestry linked with a particular place and identity.

At a more behavioural level is the notion of *communities of practice*, developed within learning theory (Lave & Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998): functional units that come about when people work together towards a particular goal. While in imagined communities the grammar of inclusion invokes identity connections across time and space, here it centres on practical goals, potentially more inclusive as membership is, at least in theory, based on performed actions. Thus, when a stakeholder, such as one quoted at the beginning of this chapter, claims that an event is ‘by the community, for the community’, whether the implicit meaning is ‘imagined’ or ‘of practice’ has *potentially opposite* implications for who is included (cf. Adell et al. 2015: 8).

Another framing of community appears within institutional discourse, where ‘community’ posits an ambiguous object of both aspiration and paternalism. To speak of communities has become something of a shorthand for ‘not us’ from a dominant group’s standpoint: outsiders (young people, minorities, the ‘underserved’) that need to either be involved in something they are not involved in (museums, university, opera), or else are in need of some sort of preservation and protection (empowering ‘them’ to maintain cultural practices) (Waterton & Smith 2010). From the perspective of a majority culture and its institutions, this discursive construction of the *outreach community* smacks of a tick-box mentality: a ‘euphemism’ acting as a ‘verbal gift from the rich to the poor’ (Noyes 2006: 29). As such, it is often accompanied by protestations of service and care. For minority groups, the outreach community can offer a safe space where the conditions for cultural production that, within the majority culture, attach little value to their ICH do not apply. However, it can equally be experienced as paternalistic and reifying marginalising power dynamics (Waterton & Smith 2010), facilitated by essentialism and facilitating minoritisation (Agbe-Davies 2010: 376). The grammar of inclusion here is often articulated by a dominant group rather than those who are considered to be its members.

Our final example is community as based on the inherent connection of being in a place (cf. Cohen [1985] 2007). For ICH, this implies defining a community not only ‘in terms of its relationship to its ICH’, but also ‘in terms of the spaces in which the ICH occurs and the community exists’ (Blake 2009: 61). These *communities of*

*place* inevitably come with ambiguities, as spatial and temporal boundaries often remain unspecified. Is the 'Penzance community' in Cornwall those living explicitly within the town's parish, or does it include those who might use 'Penzance' as shorthand for their home town simply because it is the nearest town and they live rurally, or in a smaller satellite village? Is the community within which the Frisian open air play of Jorwert is embedded limited to those living in the village, or does it include the theatre-makers from around the Netherlands who are regularly in the village over summer? In the absence of clarity of scope, communities of place are ambiguous constructs that may mean different things to different people.

### **Boundary narratives and intangible cultural heritage in Cornwall, Frisia, and the Livonian Coast**

The examples above serve to illustrate how the word 'community' can activate different grammars of inclusion that have clear consequences for who is included, and who not. How, then, are the boundaries of communities experienced by individuals? What types of community can we recognise in the boundary narratives in which these experiences are negotiated? And what is the function of ICH in the boundary work that maintains these communities? Four themes can be discerned when we assess our data with these questions in mind, which can be understood as activating grammars of inclusion (though rarely, if ever, consciously or explicitly), drawing variously on the types of community outlined above. Firstly, there are narratives in which community is constructed around ancestry and the sense of belonging this implies. Secondly, we find narratives in which respondents identify as community members based on place. Then, there are narratives in which these two are entwined and ancestry and place corroborate each other. A final recurrent type of narrative is one where the boundary narrative centres on language practice.

#### *Ancestry*

We came across several narratives in which genealogical heritage and ancestry create ruptures between 'us' and 'not us', shared by those involved in ICH in Cornwall and the Livonian Coast. Interestingly, this rupture is not always also negotiated as a community boundary. In fact, communities are sometimes posited despite it, demonstrating that the minority culture itself is not necessarily activated in the ICH practice. Thus, for instance, one respondent reflects on his Cornish, Welsh, and English heritage, but ultimately rejects an English identity in favour of a Cornish one. In the end, he concludes, 'what matters is what you identify with or as, and that you're allowed to – and nobody has the right to disallow that' (K78). Another respondent discusses his mixed ancestry in a similar manner: this makes his membership of the community less automatically a given, but in the end he is 'Cornish, simple as that' (K85). What we see here is an ambiguous negotiation of the importance of Cornish ancestry: on the one hand, it seems significant to mention that one has Cornish blood when considering whether one belongs to the Cornish community; on the other, and possibly mindful of the fact that some may consider

membership on these grounds as doubtful, this significance is ultimately rejected as a strict boundary for that community. Arguably, there is an element here of negotiating between different value systems at a broader level, with the interviewee being aware that appeals to ancestry as shibboleth (Noyes 2003; Michael 1998), albeit seen as appropriate for some gatekeepers, can be regarded as problematically racialising or nationalistic by others (while also playing to social desirability in the interview context). Negotiating imagined and real objections in this way can result in individuals' attempts to keep a 'foot in both camps' without having to declare their allegiance to either.

In the Livonian context, we also see a recurring need to make sense of mixed ancestry, and whether this is enough to consider oneself a member of the community (which may also have to do with the extent to which who 'counts' as Livonian has been stratified; see Ernštreits et al. in this volume). Here, however, the answer does not lie so much in whether one chooses to belong to the minority group – despite or because of being of mixed heritage. Rather, whether mixed ancestry is enough to call oneself Livonian depends on personality and behaviour, with the latter hinting at a performative mode that brings these narratives relating to a minority identity into dialogue with the ICH of that culture. One respondent, for example, compares herself with her brother. While he identifies more as Latvian, she feels differently: 'I understand that I have Latvian roots, but I feel like a Livonian'. Interestingly, the boundary she negotiates is marked by personality traits: being headstrong, independent, and a free spirit is what marks her as Livonian, she says (L13). Thus, ancestry alone does not suffice: one must perform one's identity, almost prove oneself worthy of community membership by being a certain type of person.

### *Place*

The same respondent cited above saying that, in the end, the individual chooses the community they belong to, also puts forward spatial setting as an important boundary for that community. When discussing the community within which the Golowan Festival is embedded, he explains that for him, this encompasses those 'people who feel Penzance is one of their places'. Note here how, just as with ancestry, boundary does not mean confinement. One does not have to consider Penzance as their only locality: one among several is, apparently, enough. For himself, he mentions his upbringing there as the reason he feels a connection to the event, and also allows for a far less clearly defined spatial belonging. It remains to be seen, however, whether he is willing to go as far as some Golowan participants who, as he says, 'just think it's for everyone and suggest that anyone who has experienced Golowan once must feel a connection to it' (K78). In any case, although one must have been 'there' to be part of the community, this spatial boundary is left highly flexible – what, indeed, does it mean to consider Penzance as 'one of [your] places'? Although, on the face of it, it thus seems very easy to cross a constructed line between insider and outsider, there is also the impression that, as with ancestry, there are gradations. This is not made explicit, though; what is made explicit is an ideal in which Golowan is, in principle, 'for everyone' – which necessitates a very

open attitude in which there is no decisive difference between having attended Golowan once, or having lived in Penzance one's entire life. We see a similar, very broad notion of who can claim ownership of ICH in Estonia, by a respondent who does not identify as Livonian herself: 'I don't know if it has to belong to someone in particular, so maybe it would be good if those who feel touched by it work together to pass it on' (E9). Her plea for, as she calls it, 'cooperation' to ensure knowledge of the ICH is established among Latvians and Estonians suggests a community of practice that goes far beyond strictly local boundaries – although her proclaimed outsider identity means that the ethical implications of this construction in terms of appropriate participation remain contingent on the 'mutual recognition' (Groth 2015) of others within that community.

In contrast to this openness, we find a respondent in Frisia who has just visited *It Gelok fan Fryslân (Frisia's Happiness)*, a performance by theatre company Tryater, which explores the seemingly paradoxical fact that Frisians are the happiest people in the Netherlands, despite Frisia being a relatively poor part of the country. Attending this performance is clearly a powerful boundary experience for her, as it makes her feel how 'when it's Frisian, it's *our own* thing' (F2; emphasis added). That also means it is emphatically *not* 'for everyone'. Instead, for her the fact that this performance is in Frisian makes it – and other events like it – a bulwark. As with the couple cited at the beginning of this chapter, the most significant Other here, against which that bulwark is especially needed, is 'the Randstad [which] thinks it is the Netherlands, while we as Frisians and Drenths and Limburgers say the Netherlands is a bit bigger'. (The Randstad is the area in the west of the Netherlands where the country's larger cities are concentrated, and which is often considered the centre, as opposed to peripheral provinces such as Frisia, Limburg, and Drenthe.) That spatial division is for her symbolised by the Frisian language, of which she says that it 'is very important to me, I think it is a beautiful language, so [...] I don't feel Dutch'. This enables her to engage in very strict boundary maintenance around what it means to be Frisian: when asked whether she might identify as anything other than Frisian, she strongly rejects this, despite having 'moved from Frisia' long ago. That in itself was a formative boundary experience, which made her 'very chauvinistic', so that she does not 'relate to Dutch people at all'. She emphasises her upbringing in Frisia as the reason for this – apparently, this connection to the place has made her Frisian through and through.

Such emphasis on a connection to place as the essence of a community can also be found in the Livonian context, but again somewhat differently. In the experience of one respondent here, moving away from it may lessen the bond with the community: 'I don't know if I could feel Livonian if I lived somewhere far away, somewhere else, abroad for example, or in Latgale [a region in the east of Latvia]' (L24). Sharing a hypothetical narrative in which she moves away from the Livonian Coast, she comes to the conclusion that spatiality is decisive in her conception of a Livonian community, to the extent that Latgale would feel as far away as 'abroad'. However, whether the reverse would also hold true – that moving to this area could result in becoming Livonian, even if one is not of Livonian heritage – remains an open question.

We do find this to be the case in Cornwall, where one respondent who moved there as an adult (K81), despite describing herself as ‘a British person’ (arguably tapping into a Cornish perspective vis-à-vis the outsider), also claims she feels ‘like Cornwall is *my* home and it is, now, because I’ve been here for a long time’ (emphasis added). This, for her, is a dichotomy. If she wants to feel Cornwall is her home, she will have to – at least somewhat – leave behind being British: ‘I’m not coming down here being this British person. I want to enjoy what Cornwall was, is, and merge with that’. However, this feeling of (partial) belonging is not a given for this respondent, and she hints at border experiences that emphasised this for her: ‘I was always a little bit [like] “Oh am I welcome or am I not welcome?”. I’ve had experiences of both’. It is especially her decision to be involved in a local cultural association that has helped her to negotiate those experiences and still count herself as at least somewhat part of the community. Thus, while she acknowledges that not everybody may consider her a member of the community, she still feels that this involvement entitles her to that sense of belonging. Note, however, how she makes her claims in a careful and deliberately non-committal manner, which suggests that the boundary experiences she hints at made it clear to her that this is a sensitive matter on which she can expect to be contested. This may also explain the shift, during the construction of her boundary narrative, from a community of place to a community of practice.

### *Ancestry and place*

As we already saw in some of the narratives discussed in the previous sections, ancestry and place can regularly become entwined – either strengthening each other, or, instead, with the one making up for the lack of the other when it comes to negotiating one’s belonging to a certain community. We see a strong example of this in an interview in the context of Padstow’s May Day. At first, the respondent simply defines himself as Cornish, and discusses at length growing up in the region. However, when the interviewer asks him whether he considers himself an insider or an outsider in the context of May Day, he remembers a poignant boundary experience he once had:

It still troubles me that I was once confronted by an elder lady, and told I had no place in May Day because I was born down Treliste [Cornwall’s main hospital in Truro, twenty-five miles away from Padstow]. Still remember.

(K87)

Interestingly, although his tone implies that he does not agree with this basis for outsidership, the respondent seems to have internalised this rejection of his community membership, saying he ‘better not’ claim the position of a full insider. While he keeps stressing that his personal history gives him a feeling of connectedness to the ICH, he also acknowledges, in a tone suggesting a deep sense of hurt, that by the measures of the older lady, that will never be enough. Despite ‘Cornish’ being the more seemingly impermeable community of ancestry, it is conversely

Padstow – a town in which he has lived seemingly all but the first hours of his life – as a *place* community that provides the boundary experience.

In the Frisian context, we see a similar negotiation of how belonging based on place may be at least partly negated by having different roots, in a boundary narrative shared by the couple cited at the beginning of this chapter (F9/F10). Interestingly, in their case it is not because of boundary maintenance by insiders that this couple find themselves outside the community. It is they themselves who cannot imagine identifying as Frisian, despite having lived in the village of Kollum longer than they have anywhere else. Granted, as we saw, they consider their neighbours from urban The Hague even more strongly to be outsiders. However, even for themselves, merely living in the village, no matter how long, is not enough to become insiders. Thus, although place certainly is a factor, not having roots in Frisia is decisive.

### *The role of language*

What is left unsaid by the couple discussed at the end of the previous section, but what underlies almost all negotiations of the boundaries for the Frisian community, is the role of language. If one has not been raised speaking Frisian, or can claim a heritage of several generations of Frisian speakers, it seems it is, ultimately, impossible to identify as Frisian. This also means, as we saw before, that theatrical events in the Frisian language can become strongly felt border experiences. Some of these are discussed more extensively elsewhere in this volume (see Zijlstra, Aardema & Moenandar), but it is instructive to mention one here. A respondent (F40) who has just visited the performance *It deiboek fan Anne Frank* [*The Diary of Anne Frank*], a Frisian translation of an American theatrical adaptation of the world famous wartime diary, reflects on the use of Frisian in the play, which may keep Dutch people – like himself – from attending. However, he also acknowledges how this use of Frisian has a purpose in creating a community – to which he will always remain an outsider. Language proficiency and its community of practice thus becomes a boundary, and a rather strict one, since it even excludes someone like this man, who has lived in Frisia for a long time and who is proficient enough in the language to attend and enjoy a play in it. Again, much is left unsaid here as well, as one is left to wonder whether mere language proficiency – which can, after all, be attained – would be enough to be considered part of the community.

In the Livonian context, language also regularly provides boundary experiences. Given the extremely small numbers of fully proficient speakers, however, the role it plays is necessarily somewhat different than in Frisia. Here, for instance, we find the respondent we cited at the beginning of the chapter (L56), who on the one hand acknowledges the importance of language, something 'innate to us' (emphasis added), as a community boundary. On the other hand, however, he also needs to negotiate the possibility that one can situate oneself within that community even if one does not speak the language. As we said earlier, this is embedded in a certain anxiety, which we also saw with regard to place and ancestry: once these are put forward as significant boundaries, there is always a chance that

one may be considered an outsider if one cannot claim enough of them. However, there is more going on here. These comments are preceded by the respondent discussing the future of Livonian, and how young people are now having the chance to grow up to be the Livonians they really are – not in the least by learning the language. Thus, what comes to the fore is a community with language at its core – without the language, there would be no Livonians – but one can be part of that community, safeguarding it, without being able to actually speak it. The language, in other words, is the ICH itself and as such, even non-speakers can belong to its community of practice as long as they engage with it (as argued by Ernštreits et al., this volume). We also see this when an Estonian respondent (E4) talks about Livonian as something that, potentially, on the level of humanity in general, ‘belongs to everyone’, so that everyone could take it upon themselves to safeguard ‘this heritage’. However, she immediately nuances this. She draws parallels with artistic debates about cultural appropriation, and whether ‘a white person has the right, for example, to engage with issues that belong to Black people, or to [...] make some kind of story out of them’. This makes her wonder whether she, ‘as an Estonian artist’, has the right to speak ‘the Livonian language’ in her art, ‘while we have people who still speak the pure Livonian language’. She concludes, ultimately, that she feels she has, on the grounds that ‘if you have enough love for this culture and language, then the heritage still belongs to you’. That this is not true for everybody involved becomes clear when we see how, for another respondent, the boundary experience of being a non-speaker of Livonian has the opposite outcome. He starts off by saying that he is Livonian by birth and ancestry, and ‘that Livonian blood still runs’ (L44). He halts, however, when the conversation turns to what the difference is between Livonians and Latvians. He discusses how his family always spoke Latvian, and no real mention was made of being Livonian: ‘Maybe my ears missed it, it didn’t stick, but [...] I speak Latvian’. He finishes with the conclusion that he actually feels Latvian. Thus, despite a clear affinity with the Livonian community, for this respondent the lack of language proficiency leads to self-policing. As someone who speaks Latvian, he excludes himself from that community. This is especially poignant because the respondent began with positing a boundary – of blood still running – that *would* include him. Thus, while the Estonian respondent quoted above who is clear that she has no Livonian heritage uses a grammar of inclusion that enables her to conclude she *can* be a part of the community, someone who *does* have Livonian ancestry, conversely, uses a different grammar of inclusion to position themselves *outside* that community. At the intersection of a heartfelt sense of belonging, and the ‘dirty work’ of ‘boundary maintenance’, this respondent succumbs to the latter.

### **Concluding remarks**

At the beginning of this chapter, we mentioned that boundary work can be an expression of anxiety. We saw this in the examples discussed in the previous section. When can one claim to have lived close enough, or long enough in a village or province to consider oneself part of its community of place? When is one’s

ancestry too mixed, or too recent, to reach the point where the imagination can no longer be stretched to remain included in the imagined community of Cornish, Frisians, or Livonians? When has one done enough to be included in the community of practice?

As we saw, some of the most 'dirty' boundary maintenance triggered by questions such as these is to be found in what is *not* said. Who, in the end, can really claim this minority ICH as their own? To whom is ownership awarded, not tentatively, with caveats, arguing against those who may challenge this claim, but unambiguously? Even where a community of practice is in place, it does not always seem to be completely overlapping with the imagined community that owns the ICH. Underlying many claims of place, ancestry, and even practice is, ultimately, quite an essentialist notion of what makes up the Livonian, Frisian, and Cornish communities. These communities are, furthermore, conflated with the ICH event communities. As the ICH offers boundary experiences for our respondents, they work through these in narratives that demarcate who can be considered Frisian, Cornish (or Padstonian, or Penzancian), or Livonian, and who, therefore can claim ownership of the ICH in question. In short, our respondents do not seem to keep the local community and the ICH community apart, which indicates – despite sometimes strong claims of a community of practice – that they are more or less connected: thus, for example, being Livonian comes to mean being part of the Livonian ICH community.

This is made most explicit in the Frisian context – interestingly enough both by those who claim membership for themselves, and by those who acknowledge they could never do so – but seems at least somewhat present in all the boundary narratives we presented here. Practice (with its relatively more porous grammar of inclusion) is often presented explicitly as the boundary for belonging to the community that owns the heritage; but something more impermeable is often implicitly at play: deep and indisputable roots are the most obvious claim to belong to the community. It is against this claim that the more tentative, pragmatic claims should be understood. The question remains, however, whether this implicit norm can ever be considered a reality, rather than just an ideal against which reality can be measured and must be negotiated – whether, in other words, anyone can actually lay claim to such roots. There is a sense here that respondents are themselves unsure how to articulate the roles that different types of community – of consent and descent – imply, as they are caught between discourses of inclusion and exclusion, between ICH's paradoxical status as something performative that all can partake in, and something that forms a key role in building and asserting a distinctive identity.

Thus, several of our respondents shared boundary narratives that saw them engaging in boundary work in which they placed *themselves* outside the community they were demarcating. And many who did posit themselves inside the community did so rather tentatively. What was striking in a number of the latter cases was that the boundary narrative took the form of a sort of counternarrative, in which the respondent seemed to argue against a (real or imagined) master narrative (Bamberg & Andrews 2004) according to which they would not count as members of the community. Thus, when a respondent says 'I don't speak [Livonian], but

I feel part of that community’, or follows a discussion of their mixed ancestry by saying ‘what matters is what you identify with or as’, they seem to be formulating *alternative* boundary narratives vis à vis dominant ones where this is simply not enough. This could be partly informed by the need for the kind of ‘mutual recognition’ that has been suggested as a basis for the construction of community in a heritage context (Groth 2015). Thus, in the communities discussed throughout this chapter, ICH offers boundary experiences that confront the respondents with place, ancestry, or practice as more or less clear boundaries that decide whether people can be considered insiders or outsiders and so comprise the *different* grammars of inclusion implicitly or explicitly activated in (self)policing the boundaries of those communities.

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### 3 Heritage discourse and voices of change

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Any consideration of heritage that addresses notions of majority and minority must inevitably engage with notions of power, of potential dissonance and contestation, that shape the heritage contexts under study. Indeed, critical heritage studies have engaged extensively with these dynamics in highlighting that heritage is socially constructed and therefore, intertwined with processes of power and privilege, not neutral. The role of discourse in shaping and controlling what can be considered ‘heritage’ has also been identified as particularly important (Smith 2006). In this chapter, we draw on heritage and language studies to consider the discursive dynamics of national majority and minority cultures and their intangible cultural heritage (ICH), which incorporates discourses that can both confine and liberate. In particular, we focus on tools and approaches that can be used to analyse discourse in this context and those that might effect change. In better understanding what voices are present in the ecosystem, how they interact, and how they construct perspectives on difference, discourse, language, and heritage as intimately related facets of their minority identity, we seek practical pathways to revoice minority ICH within a hegemonic discourse.

The rationale for attending to discourse is interwoven with how key concepts are socially constructed. The label ‘minority’ is an inherently relative term denoting its counterpart ‘majority’, and in that relation lies a plethora of economic, political, and spatial dynamics that contribute to the construction and maintenance of difference. For our purposes, minoritisation can also be understood as a social process with potential material consequences in terms of distribution of resources or social inequality. It involves construction of difference that leads to ‘systemic inequalities, oppression, and marginalization [which] place individuals into “minority” status’ (Sotto-Santiago 2019: 73). Through minoritisation (note the de-agentialised use of the word ‘minoritisation’), which can be transmitted and reified through, for example, master narratives or mainstream discourses and (inter)national institutions, minority and majority groups in a given context are established and maintained. One mechanism by which these differences are discursively constructed germane to the study of minority ICH is described by linguistic anthropologists Susan Gal and Judith Irvine (Irvine & Gal 2000, Gal & Irvine 2019), who offer a semiotic approach to understanding ideologised processes construing ‘convincing stereotypes of people, spaces and activities’. Gal and Irvine were concerned with

better understanding the discursive nature of difference ‘in language and in social life’ and how such discourses ‘naturalise hierarchy and domination’ (2019: 1), and therefore offer a useful account of these processes in our context of national minority and majority cultures. Although originally formulated to describe language ideologies (Irvine & Gal 2000), their account of ‘the semiotics of differentiation’ (Gal & Irvine 2019) can also describe broader dynamics and has been extended to consider, for example, ideologies of communication (Spitzmüller 2022). Language ideologies ‘connect discourse with lived experiences’ (Woolard 1998: 27), and as such complement more explicitly social formulations of such processes while retaining a focus on the discursive, the voiced, that also fits ICH’s performative, social character. Gal and Irvine outline some discursive processes by which construction of difference can occur, including:

- *Iconization* which ‘involves a transformation of the sign relationship between linguistic features (varieties) and the social images with which they are linked’ (Irvine & Gal 2000: 37). These features are then made to be (and are subsequently interpreted as being) iconic of the identities of the speakers. For example, Livonian speakers are given attributes such as being tall; Frisian speakers as freedom-loving, independently minded and stubborn; a Cornish accent stereotyped as harmless but simple. In such a way, stereotypes are galvanised as part of a majority-forged narrative that then becomes an integral part of the discourse concerning that minority group.
- *Fractal recursivity* in which binaries or categories, which do not form taxonomies, are created, such as dividing landscapes into East and West (Gal & Irvine 2019).
- *Erasure*, the process by which these distinctions are built and maintained ‘in which ideology [...] renders some persons or activities [...] invisible’ (Irvine & Gal 2000: 38) or in other words, ‘experience that does not fit is erased’ (Gal & Irvine 2019: 137). For example, providing signage only in English erases the visual presence and awareness of societal and individual multilingualism (Bednarek & Meek 2024); language endangerment discourses have ignored semi-speakers, passive language users and other linguistic knowledges or skills, because the intention has been to document the last ‘real’ speakers of the ‘dying’ language (Meek 2016; Bednarek & Meek 2024: np).

These processes are not self-sufficient but (re)produced by people, as ‘people construct ideological representations of linguistic differences’ (Irvine & Gal 2000: 37) – and, by implication, cultural differences. The processes of iconisation, fractal recursivity, and erasure can be imagined working well outside the realm of language ideologies. For example, Cosgrove (1984/1998) holds that each socio-economic formation, state or another form of governance makes efforts to ‘erase’ the landscape of an earlier formation (see Vītola et al., this volume). As these semiotic processes indicate, these representations may originate from hegemonic discourses. This power relationship has real-world consequences and causes, but is to some degree constructed and maintained in the narratives and imaginaries of

powerful discursive actors. The social process of minoritisation, then, is in part a discursive one in which majority ideologies construct and assign the cultural position of the minority as such.

The social construction of heritage likewise draws on discursive processes articulated and embedded by powerful actors, and presupposes a socially constructed process of meaning-making. As Laurajane Smith famously asserts, ‘there is no such thing as heritage’, but rather it is a cultural practice (Smith 2006: 13ff) that is contained and constrained by an authorised heritage discourse (AHD). Besides conceiving of heritage as (im)material artefacts, heritage can be regarded ‘as a cultural and social process, which engages with acts of remembering that work to create ways to understand and engage with the present’ (Smith 2006: 2). Since heritage is a discourse, ‘a form of social practice [...] meanings, forms of knowledge and expertise, power relations and ideologies are reproduced through language’ (Smith 2006 : 2). And just as processes of minoritisation can be understood as being constructed and maintained by mechanisms such as those described by Gal and Irvine above, heritage itself is intimately linked with voicings of power and privilege. This has consequences: as Smith says, the idea of discourse as a social action ‘acknowledges that the way people talk about, discuss and understand things, such as “heritage”, *have a material consequence that matters*’ (Smith 2006: 14; *our emphasis*). Stereotypes constructed via iconisation (often exoticising or patronising) about people, place, and culture; erasure in which distinctive cultures are assimilated to the majority – we can see these processes coming together within an ICH context, as Hodsdon and Moenandar describe in this volume. In seeking to counter the AHD and seek socially just outcomes, it is therefore important that inclusive approaches to heritage engage proactively with any discursive constructions that ‘may inadvertently work to discourage the equitable participation of those groups whose understandings of the nature of heritage are excluded from that discourse’ (Waterton et al. 2006: 340). Just as the nature of ICH as a social practice invites focus on its broader sociological context as we do in this volume, so a better understanding of its discursive dynamics (as a facet of that social practice) is important in both countering the AHD and filling the discursive gaps it has left behind. So in this chapter, first we consider how discourse studies have been brought to bear on understanding – and in seeking to dismantle – hegemonies, including the AHD; then, we explore the potential of combining a critical approach to discourse analysis with an appreciative one in seeking to open up the space to revoice minority ICH.

### **Discourse, hegemony, and (intangible cultural) heritage**

One genealogy of hegemony comes from post-structuralist discourse scholars, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. With their aim ‘to establish the “archaeology of silence”’ – echoing Gal & Irvine’s concept of erasure described above – they hold that the concept of hegemony ‘alludes to a kind of contingent intervention required by the crisis or collapse of what would have been a “normal” historical development’ (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 7). Moreover, they ‘try to detect the presence of

that void which the logic of hegemony will attempt to fill' (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 8). For example, building 'the unified national state' was among the most prominent political projects that necessitated hegemony (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 7–42, 65–71). The ultimate task of nation-building is creating or strengthening a single collective identity which transcends ethnic, cultural, and linguistic differences both regional and based on social classes: 'the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship' (Anderson 1983: 6–7).

The AHD is likewise a discursive construction based on a hegemony in which institutions have shaped what heritage is, and what it is not. Its manifestation upon ICH has been discussed (Smith 2006; Smith & Waterton 2009), and although ICH does present something of a challenge to the AHD, the extent to which it has successfully challenged existing power relations is less clear (Smith 2015; Akagawa & Smith 2019). This is readily evident in the somewhat patronising tone of much media coverage of ICH. For example, one UK newspaper headline reporting UNESCO listing reads: 'What links baguettes, bees and bear hunts? All join UNESCO "human treasures" list', with the subtitle 'French delegates at conference greet announcement with delight, *brandishing bread sticks aloft*' (Henley 2022 (*The Guardian*); *our emphasis*) (see Hodsdon & Moenandar, this volume, for a more in-depth analysis of othering or erasing media discourse of ICH). In this example, a discursive construction is doubly at work where an AHD works to discredit ICH via belittling language – hinted at in the headline and confirmed in the subtitle – seeking its erasure in relation to a tangible, Western norm; and where the culture to whom the ICH belongs is likewise iconised by being cast as comic figures in a tableau which evokes medieval peasants wielding pitchforks, and thereby constructs French people as different from – and arguably inferior to – the author of the piece, here representing a British majority voice. While a French majority may be viewed by the UK media as 'fair game', such framings of ICH are not without consequence, particularly for minoritised cultures, in which the impact of the discursive minoritisation in creating broader narratives can have real-world consequences in terms of autonomy or resource allocation, for example.

In the context of minority ICH, indeed, discourse analysis has been less prominent an analytical tool beyond broad considerations in the context of the AHD (e.g. Waterton & Smith 2009; Smith 2015), including UNESCO's policy context, on which Melis and Chambers (2021) and Melis, Wise, and Badurina (2022) have used Foucauldian analysis to consider 'ICH' as a discursive object bound up with that of UNESCO and related policy and legal frameworks. Indeed, the vast majority of our interview participants had not heard of 'ICH', and had difficulty understanding it when it was explained. There are fewer studies of the discourse surrounding ICH in minority contexts, despite the need to understand the various hegemonic voices at play in shaping it. Discourse studies, and the variety of discourse analytical approaches within it are, we suggest, a key way in which these particular majority–minority dynamics have been understood, and which we consider in more detail below in order to ask what the basis might be of a minority ICH that is underpinned by counter-hegemonic and inclusive discursive principles.

***Emancipatory discourse studies? From critical to appreciative approaches***

Most discursive studies in one way or another either apply or depart from the Foucauldian understanding of discourse. By forming ‘the object of which they speak’, discourses are conditioned by the regularities of a particular discursive formation (Foucault 1972: 49). Yet ‘discourse’ has also been used somewhat vaguely in theory and research (Pennycook 1994; Jørgensen & Philips 2002; Waugh et al. 2016). Discourse Theoretical Analysis (DTA) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are two approaches that apply a critical lens, although they have conceived of the concept somewhat differently (Jørgensen & Philips 2002; Carpentier & De Cleen 2007: 277; Carpentier, De Cleen & Van Brussel 2019). Drawing on Laclau and Mouffe, with ‘discourse-as-representation’ or ‘discourse-as-ideology’, DTA regards the social as a non-exclusively discursive reality, focusing on how it is constructed via the structures of meaning (Carpentier et al. 2019: 5). DTA is preoccupied with the discursive (or ideological) constructions behind linguistic (and other signifying) practices (Carpentier, De Cleen & Van Brussel 2019: 9). This ontology has been described as having ‘important critical potential, because it allows us to question the inevitability of particular representations of society, and the unchangeability of particular ways of doing and organizing communication and media. This, in turn, opens up spaces for envisaging alternatives’ (Carpentier, De Cleen & Van Brussel 2019: 14). CDA is similarly interested in social justice, and brought together scholars explicitly interested in unmasking the power and interests of particular groups (e.g. van Leeuwen 1995; van Dijk 1998; van Leeuwen & Wodak 1999; for an account of its utility to heritage studies, see Waterton, Smith & Campbell 2006), by taking a more explicitly language-based approach. Arising from Critical Linguistics, CDA focuses on discourse-as-language that (re)produces unequal relationships between groups, by representing some phenomena and positioning some groups as of greater worth than others. Nevertheless, it has moved beyond Critical Linguistics in adopting an interdisciplinary approach, studying not only texts, but also their contexts (Waterton, Smith & Campbell 2006). CDA likewise explicitly distanced itself from the trend in postmodern philosophy and cultural studies to reduce the social to discourse only (van Leeuwen 2006: 290). The application of CDA in heritage contexts by Smith, Waterton, and others has enabled insight into the processes by which these hegemonic constructions take shape at an institutional level (e.g. Waterton 2010; Waterton, Smith & Campbell 2006; Whittington 2021), and in particular contexts (e.g. De Bernardi 2019; Hodsdon 2022, 2021) and forms part of a wider discursive engagement with the imbrications of societal power structures within heritage.

Casting a critical eye on these structures yields vital information about the social and discursive mechanisms by which hegemony is shaped and upheld. In considering how minority voices might be amplified as part of a polyvocal approach (see Hodsdon, this volume), the notion of revoicing implies an additional analytical frame that also attends to discursive mechanisms deployed by groups that have been minoritised in these hegemonic processes. This desire to analyse a fuller range of voices underpinned a call by scholars in discourse and language studies

for a more ‘positive’ discourse analysis (PDA). For them, critically oriented discourse theories that expose how hegemonic power is constructed and maintained have not achieved their ‘emancipatory potential’, and it has been argued that in critical approaches there is ‘little space for an understanding of human agency, interpretation, or change’ (Pennycook 1994: 126). CDA is clearly concerned with effecting positive social change but, as Hughes observes, although it ‘explicitly theorizes both oppression and opposition, the overwhelming majority of published CDS scholarship focuses on the former’, in that it attends ‘primarily to semiotic mechanisms of oppression in an effort to expose hegemonic discourses and their negative impact on society’ (Hughes 2018: 193). As a result, Kress has argued that CDA is not effective in advancing ‘(productive) accounts of alternative social organization’ (Kress 2000: 16). As Martin, drawing on Kress’ call, puts it, a ‘positive’ approach would enable a better ‘understanding of how change happens, for the better, across a range of sites – how feminists remake gender relations in our world, how Indigenous people overcome their colonial heritage, how migrants renovate their new environs and so on’ (2004: 184). While these negotiations are studied in the context of ICH, the use of discourse as a methodological tool and framing is less prominent. Instead of being an alternative to CDA, PDA is described as ‘a necessary complement to “negative” studies aimed at progressive social change’ (Hughes 2018: 196–197), or what Martin calls ‘a yin/yang perspective’ (Martin 2004: 183; Bartlett 2012); in other words, deconstructive and constructive activities are required for emancipation, in Critical Discourse Studies (Bartlett 2012) but also elsewhere. For example, for analysing language policy and planning,

a deconstructive and emancipatory activity such as CDA can play a key role [...] in reversing negative language ideologies adopted by some groups of speakers towards their forms of speech or writing and should be incorporated into positive language planning and language policy projects.

(Lo Bianco 2009: 101)

The difference between PDA and CDA lies ‘in the power position of discourse they study, the former targeting marginal, non-hegemonic discourses and the latter – hegemonic, mainstream ones’ (Chojnicka 2015: 225). A ‘positive’ approach in our context, then, would not in and of itself attend to the shaping power structures such as derive from the AHD, although these are vital in our understanding of the dynamics at play. Rather, in *addition* to critical approaches that study how powerful voices shape discourse, they also study how marginalised voices answer back.

Despite the term being coined two decades ago, PDA is not widely used. As Bartlett (2017) suggests, its ‘ambivalent status’ is due to various factors such as that it *is* used in different contexts that ‘often [do] not use the label directly’, and that CDA ‘is positive inasmuch as critique is a necessary step in promoting change for the better’ (Bartlett 2017: 133). He has also suggested PDA can be reactive, that is, focused on texts that resist the hegemonic rather than considering how they gain a foothold and actively reshape them, in particular by considering the link between discursive practices and the social context that gives the ‘conditions

of possibility' for their realisation (2012). It is also the case that the impact of academic analyses – CDA or not – can be realised by the nature of the recommendations they make and the ways they are translated (or not) to those who are empowered to interpret and enact them. Yet in this subtle shift in emphasis – from how power structures are maintained to how they are, or might be, dismantled – there is potential for valuable insights; like CDA, 'PDA is also fuelled by the potential for analysis to have an effect – however small – on the social world. The difference being that it analyses the discourse we like rather than the discourse we wish to criticise' (Macgilchrist 2007: 74).

Notwithstanding reservations about PDA's distinctiveness or its potential to be practically emancipatory any more than CDA has been, the lens is particularly germane to the concept of revoicing. Indeed, Bartlett (2012) considers 'revoicing' to be a key means by which PDA has an effect. Drawing, as we do throughout this volume, on the notion of polyphony, Bartlett draws on Bakhtin's definition as 'truth, or in this case power, as distributed across an array of voices and across a range of orders of indexicality in which different speakers' voices and the identities they construe for themselves are differently legitimate and hence powerful' (Bartlett 2012: 19) (see Chapter 1 for the notion of revoicing as applied in this volume). An effective voice must, as Bartlett points out, be legitimate: that is, 'one through which the individual is entitled to identify themselves within that social milieu' (Bartlett 2012: 18). While our ecosystem approach hypothesises that more voices will be identified than may be expected, it also cautions that some voices may not be legitimate in all circumstances. In an ICH ecosystem the effect of these new voices sometimes – though not always – will be a new, hybrid one forged in the in-between space of the majority—minority intercultural encounter (Bhabha 1994). This is one potential outcome of an ecosystem-level approach, as described by one aspect of our concept of revoicing, which involves better understanding the plurality of voices in a particular ICH practice. Here, 'the creation of a hybrid voice will not be an individual effort but the collaborative achievement of a variety of speakers each making their own contributions and revoicing the contributions of others as appropriate' (Bartlett 2012: 19). There may be other times when voices do not collaborate and so become hybrid, but where the power relationship can be effectively contested, disrupted, undermined, or simply sidestepped, to comprise 'a voice that carries local social structures into contexts generally dominated by the voices of outsiders' (Bartlett 2012: 16). That is, what we see in this volume is an 'amplifying' approach where majority and minority remain separate, but where the former act as allies or are in turn silenced (or choose to silence themselves).

Various methodological approaches to PDA have been advanced, although its close relationship with CDA indicates likewise a concern with linking micro-level textual features with a broader genre/situational and societal context (Fairclough 2003). Beyond this, for example, Bartlett (2012) draws on Systemic Functional Linguistics to consider the separate functions of '(i) the construal of experience, (ii) the enactment of social relations and (iii) the signalling of relations between parts of texts to each other and to the here and now of the context' which comprise respectively 'the field, tenor and mode of the discourse'. These three in combination 'activate the register of a text' (Bartlett 2012: 21). In terms of voice, this register is

‘the linguistic means by which competing social systems are realised in discourse’ (Bartlett 2012). Of its component parts, field deals with intratextual content (such as syntax, terminology, or control as to which concepts are under discussion and their definitions); mode is concerned with the status of the text itself and its means of transmission; tenor, with the relationality between actors and texts, such as who asks questions of whom and the positions taken towards interlocutors. Macgilchrist, conversely, considers five different discursive strategies in relation to media texts: logical inversion, parody, complexification, partial reframing and radical reframing (Macgilchrist 2016: 76). There are also examples of counter-discursive analyses and other framings as summarised by Bartlett (2017), about which there is no consensus in terms of what PDA is and how it works: although all are agreed that a more pluralistic approach to analysing what discourses there are and how they are working together to voice new narratives is a valuable complement to one that focuses on a more binary lens of power and resistance. The characterisation of these approaches as either ‘negative’ or ‘positive’ discourse analysis is, we feel, somewhat too stark and value-laden a characterisation, and we suggest ‘critical’ and ‘appreciative’ as possibly more useful framings that better describe how the two might work in tandem. ‘Appreciative inquiry’ was introduced in 1987 by Cooperrider & Srivastava, themselves drawing on social constructionism and discourse theory, in the context of organisational behaviour, and ‘advocates collective inquiry into the best of what is in order to imagine what could be, followed by collective design of a desired future state that is compelling’ (Bushe 2013).

Without prescribing an overly dogmatic approach about terminology or method, then, it seems that this broader discursive approach has the potential to provide valuable insights into the inter-relation between minoritised cultures and their constructions of narratives in and around ICH in relation to that minoritisation. In what follows, we will provide a brief, illustrative analysis (Bartlett 2017; Macgilchrist 2016) of data gathered through semi-structured interviews held with people involved in ICH, ranging from casual visitors to deeply involved volunteers and professionals (see Appendix 1 for more information on these events). These interviews were held in the context of the Golowan Festival – midsummer celebrations – in Penzance, Cornwall (UK); Padstow’s May Day, a centuries-old annual celebration with festive, highly ritualised processions in another Cornish town; and a number of events centred around Livonian language and culture in Latvia and Estonia (see Appendix 2 for more information about the dataset). The aim of this analysis is to explore what sorts of insights appreciative discourse analysis might offer in terms of revoicing.

## **Appreciative discourse and constructions of minority intangible cultural heritage**

### ***Remembering the solar cycle in Cornwall***

Both case study events in Cornwall are traditional events (Penzance Golowan revived, Padstow May Day continuous), and both align with events in the solar calendar (the summer solstice and May Day). They both retain this link alongside

normative cultural practices such as food stands and funfairs. Within each event, then (as well as within the socio-cultural lives of people from Penzance and Padstow more generally) co-exist both dominant and marginalised discourses. Applying the lens of appreciative discourse to the data reveals a variety of ways in which these discourses are reconciled, contested, or circumvented.

One local, though not Padstonian, visitor to May Day (K11), links the event to a historic Padstonian – ‘of course Padstow is a fishing village originally’ – and then Cornish heritage – ‘you know Cornwall... mining, fishing, farming: that’s our heritage, tourism came on a little bit later... [laughs]’. The ‘of course’ and ‘originally’ moves the tenor (to use Bartlett’s terminology) of the statement to a position of authority relative to the interviewer. The appeal to a Padstonian and Cornish past is juxtaposed with a light-hearted parodic (to use Macgilchrist’s term) dismissal of the majority narrative that overexaggerates tourism’s role in Cornwall’s cultural and economic identity. The link with a normative ‘real’ heritage of Cornwall opens space for the replacement of majority narratives such as tourism with older ones more linked to the land and which represent an alternative Cornish identity more rooted in Cornish perspectives than outsider ones. A Golowan stakeholder (K92) emphasises the importance of the solar calendar, manipulating the mode of the text across spatial scales in a way that bypasses the national majority narrative. First, they appeal to a pan-European and then global tradition, seemingly establishing its legitimacy and normality: ‘we celebrate that midsummer as much as people do all around Europe, all around the world’. This global scale is then immediately juxtaposed with the reassertion of the local – ‘But that has a definite presence within Penzance’. A similar tactic is used by another Padstow insider (K86), although with a negotiation in tenor foregrounding storytelling (‘I was always told as a little boy’) before hesitation in stating the alternative narrative: ‘it’s more of a .... Probably a.... Pagan um... originated in Pagan times’. But then shifting spatial scales contextualises May Day within a more authoritative, meta-national discourse, ‘I know there’s various other... um... traditions throughout the world that do feature the same... similar thing’, emphasising May Day’s paradoxical normativity within a global system. The small self-correction (‘the same... similar thing’) is used to segue the mode back from the global scale to the particular, re-establishing Padstow’s distinctiveness: ‘but I don’t think there’s anything quite like Padstow May Day’. In all three examples, a temporal (appeal to the original past of Cornwall) or spatial (European and global practices) link bypasses national-level narratives that privilege tourism, or that would potentially stand to other or erase it. A cultural confidence is thus forged in a way that is neither contingent on, nor seeks to directly counter, a majority narrative such as has frequently erased the voices of marginalised cultures. The role of ICH is to provide not only a focal point but a permissive context in which to enact these alternative discursive constructions of the world.

### ***Resurrecting ‘the last Livonian’ in Estonia***

For Livonian, the fragility of the culture and relative youth of its renaissance seemingly require different approaches to reframing majority narratives than those deployed in Cornwall, underlining Bartlett’s call to account for the ‘conditions of

possibility’ of the socio-political contexts under which positive discourses can be enacted (2012). For many of those we interviewed, the simple act of mentioning Livonian in everyday discourse (to tourists, or national majority individuals) constituted a discursive incursion (Hodsdon 2022) into the hegemonic narrative, which reports the death of Livonian on a regular basis. This narrative has been countered more directly by, for example, an artwork in a Latvian context (arguably aligning to Macgilchrist’s technique of parody) ‘There Are No Livonians’, an installation on the Livonian Coast by Valts Ernštreits displaying placenames in Latvian and Livonian, with the Livonian versions ironically crossed out (Figure 3.1).

In Estonia, this narrative of Livonian demise is pervasive, although there are signs that it is beginning to be countered. One Estonian creative practitioner (E4), who identifies as being of Võru (a South Estonian minority culture) heritage – linguistically similar to, but different from, Livonian – framed their encounter with this narrative as a personal, rather than collective, task. She described Livonian



*Figure 3.1* Installation ‘There Are No Livonians’ (2021), by Valts Ernštreits (Photo: Valts Ernštreits).

(aligning with the field of the majority narrative) as ‘maybe even like a mythological concept’ in which ‘what I knew about Livonian was that the last Livonian as a native language speaker passed away in 2013’, framing the majority narrative as fact. However, her knowledge of the Southern Estonian variety of Võru enables her to frame Livonian differently to others without this background: ‘I heard a folk song in the Livonian language called “Sadā vīmō” in 2018. And I understood those words from the beginning to the end’. As a result of this experience, in her account, she radically reframes (pace Macgilchrist) the hegemonic narrative that this is no longer a living culture. This takes the form of a personal journey, as ‘the more I began to study the nature of the Livonian language, the clearer it became that I have perhaps a little better understanding of the Livonian language than, for example, my friends from Tallinn [North Estonia]’. Although she does not claim authority, armed with this knowledge she implies that she is now able to be a part of, indeed transcend, an authoritative community that is ‘in the know’.

Another Estonian municipal stakeholder (E1), involved with organising the North Livonian Festival, was fully aware of the discourse of ‘the last Livonian’ and invited a musician ‘who is supposedly the last Livonian’ to perform at the festival. Her repetition of the myth serves to discursively reinforce it, despite the possibly parodic ‘supposedly’ that casts it into the realm of hearsay. These two accounts expose the ubiquity and absurdity of the ‘last’ claim, given that this event took place ten years after the apparent death of the last Livonian in the previous account. Nevertheless, ‘unfortunately’ that person ‘couldn’t come to the festival’. The attempted act of replacing the negative discourse with practical action was unsuccessful due to the very fragility that could make it, ironically, self-fulfilling by perpetuating a lack of visibility and so the narratives about its demise.

Indeed, the tenuous visibility of Livonian in Estonia seems to leave space for greater discursive authority to be claimed by outsiders. An Estonian public official who had recently begun engaging with the Livonian heritage of their municipality was open that ‘I don’t feel a direct personal connection’ with Livonian. But this did not seem a barrier: ‘But I have read a few things and it seems interesting’, setting out a basis for potential allyship. She continues, ‘There I even read that you don’t have to be born a Livonian, that if you have an interest in the Livonian culture or language, then that already qualifies you as an expert on Livonian, so to speak [laughs]’. Again, the authority for this statement itself is kept at arm’s length by its being claimed second-hand (‘I even read’), although here this could arguably also function as an additional truth claim. The appeal to the language of institutionalised authority (‘qualifies’ and ‘expert’) emphasises the discursive space available for even outsiders with a small amount of knowledge to claim to be significant actors within Livonian culture – although the laugh, and the qualification ‘even’, perhaps parodies her own assertion, to express a discomfort with the level of insiderness claimed. Insights into discursive negotiations or narrative such as this could provide a clue as to whether outsider involvement is a welcome act of hybridity or allyship or, as the laugh seems to indicate, a more ethically tenuous taking up of insider space.

### ***Reframing minority narratives***

In both regions, majority narratives that stereotype or appropriate identities abound (see Moenandar & Hodsdon, this volume), and constitute a dominant discourse relative to which further voicings of culture are placed. Use of fact to overturn outsider discourse (inversion, in Macgilchrist's terms) is evident, for example, by a Golowan insider (K77) who takes a 'mythbusting' approach to dismiss arguably the most readily accessible (majority) semiotic association of 'Penzance':

Pirates have got nothing to do with Penzance, really. The Pirates of Penzance opera was called The Pirates of Paignton up until three days before the actual launch. They just thought Penzance sounded more exotic. And pirates is a particularly dodgy subject to celebrate, if I'm honest with you.

The provocative opening sentence that discursively undermines the link between 'pirates' and 'Penzance' (a link which neatly demonstrates Gal & Irvine's process of 'iconisation' described above, a means by which this differentiating narrative is solidified and made available to wider discourse) is qualified by the explanation that this was a majority act of exoticisation. The shift in field to suggest that the celebration of pirates is 'particularly dodgy' is also accompanied by a shift in tenor to judgement, not fact, and a more intimate 'if I'm honest with you' seemingly reluctantly underscoring the argument. Use of different discursive strategies within a single statement serves effectively to dismantle a pervasive stereotype.

Some interviewees in Padstow took a somewhat different perspective on othering majority narratives about their culture. One (K85) felt outsider researchers' paternalistic view of Padstonians is passive and uninformed, where 'There's a certain presumption of naivety amongst the native informants', the word 'native' parodically underscoring the discourse of othering primitivism perceived as being deployed by the outsider. They then directly counter this assumption: 'Most people in Padstow [...] have read everything academic published on May Day'. Having inverted the perception of paternalism in this way to assert equality, they then go a step further and position Padstonians in a more dominant role, suggesting that as informants they are unreliable (in general, but by logical implication also in this research interview itself): 'Depends on people's mood. The answers that people give are as much about winding people up, as anything else'. Placing themselves in this empowering role, in which the counter-discourse itself becomes suspect, is an extremely effective discursive means of bypassing and disrupting a majority-forged narrative without having to substantively contest it.

Another Padstonian (K87), conversely, downplayed the significance of this narrative, nuancing a more benign (yet still outsider) majority narrative that casts Padstonians as disempowered. Asked what they would ask the tourist board or other outsider organisations to say to visitors to ensure they act appropriately, the interviewee shifts the tenor away from the interviewer's question, with a rhetorical question that discursively casts them as interviewer rather than interviewee: 'Do you know what?'; and then undermining the question in a partial reframing: 'it's

less of a problem than you might think’, the tenor of the second person making clear that it is the interviewer’s misconstrual. Although there are some ‘people who choose to interfere and be rude’, in fact ‘generally the vast majority of people are respectful, and the vast majority of people are delighted to be there and delighted to watch from the side lines, so I wouldn’t overstate it’. The repetition of ‘vast majority of people’ with positive adjectives, with the clear indication that this is not a fruitful line of questioning, rhetorically asserts their own narrative upon the outsider one; and the shift in tenor again, to first person (I wouldn’t overstate...), signals control of the narrative. Indeed, in another partial inversion they frame Padstonians as the potential transgressors:

We get plenty of Padstonians who cause us trouble on May Day so, no I don’t think it’s for a second homeowner or a hotelier or a pub to say how people should behave, I think pests will be pests.

By undermining the sense that there are clearly drawn dividing lines, they claim discursive authority in a way that effectively disempowers outsider actors, whether those actors are well-intentioned or not. The cumulative sense is that outsider discourse is not something to be contested, negotiated with, or hybridised, but is simply irrelevant.

Interestingly, one Livonian tourism operator (L22) in Latvia describes this interaction in a very different way. In informing visitors about Livonian heritage: ‘I try to make it interesting for them, make it natural, so that I don’t have to tell them something, make it up, then they come back next time and I tell them a different story’. Unlike the deliberate misdirection claimed by Padstonians that seeks to undermine not only the substantive narrative (field) but the very foundations on which the narrative is formed (mode), here there is a more tenuous power relationship with the outsider, where there is a concern with ‘getting the story straight’. This more fragile majority—minority encounter is underlined by a backdrop of discursive invisibility but also more recent prohibition and hostility. It also differs from the more prevalent, often othering and disempowering, outsider gaze to which May Day has long been subject and which – along with the gentrification of Padstow further disempowering local people economically – also acts as context by which to understand their different discursive strategies.

### **Revoicing and amplifying minority intangible cultural heritage?**

As can be seen in the worked examples above, an ‘appreciative discourse analysis’ can shed light on the encounter between majority and minority cultures via ICH. The conditions of possibility in the examples from Cornwall are arguably more germane to construction of a new, empowering narrative than in the more fragile context of Livonian, where subtler partial reframing with less direct shifts in register are more evident (at least, within this limited dataset). It may be that this is a process that will change over time: as gradually it becomes more widely known that Livonians did not become extinct in medieval times and there is a different

narrative to contest, more discursive spaces will be opened up for more experimental, disruptive, and complex new discourses. Bartlett describes the potential of positive discourse as enabling an analysis which describes ‘how the emergent reconfigurations of power relations that are realised in isolation at the local level [...can...] undermine or reorient the existing structural conditions of domination within wider society’ (Bartlett 2012: 7–8). Moreover, bringing in minority discourses and perspectives, even if via fictional screen characters or narratives, enables shift away from the discourses of language endangerment which often frame minoritised contexts (Bednarek & Meek 2024). There remains a vital role for critical discourse in uncovering majority–minority ICH dynamics; but by enabling us to better understand the discursive dismantling or countering of hegemony – as manifest both through the AHD and broader ideologies of communication and semiotics of difference – an appreciative as well as critical approach to discourse analysis can point to ways in which minority ICH is already being revoiced, and offer an additional perspective in shaping the tools to support this in the future.

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**Part II**

**Analyses**



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# Voices



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## 4 ‘Torches aloft’ to Glastonbury

### The discursive construction of heritage events in Cornwall

*Laura Hodsdon and Sjoerd-Jeroen Moenandar*

Visitors to Padstow May Day – a centuries-old annual celebration at a small coastal town in Cornwall, with festive, highly ritualised processions (see Appendix 1) – may not always come with the right expectations. This is partly due to how the event is described on tourism and hospitality websites that try to attract tourists to Cornwall. At least, that is the opinion of one Padstonian:

I think the people who write about it don't fully understand it. They describe it as a festival, and there is a big difference between May Day and Glastonbury. I think people are expecting something like Glastonbury but with folk music. [...] It's not the same, but you attract the same kind of people with the same vibe.

(K88)

The problem seems to lie in the word ‘festival’ and the ensuing mismatch between the event’s reality and some visitors’ expectations: Padstow May Day is not like the Glastonbury Festival, but thinking it *might* be may lead to behaviour that this interviewee finds inappropriate. More than this, at stake is a power dynamics where some people, organisations, or companies leverage their platform to describe, and potentially ‘sell’, the event. This illustrates one of the key challenges facing minoritised European cultures: resilience in the face of the dominance of a national majority, a dominance that comes with political, economic, social, and cultural imbalances, and also an imbalance of gaze – with the minority and its culture often becoming an object to be studied or marvelled at, or a spectacle played out for amusement (Salazar 2012). This distribution of roles – who can look and who is to be looked at – is an important and constitutive aspect of minoritisation (cf. Sotto-Santiago 2019). And, as the quotation above shows, minority members are aware of how they are looked at by the majority – often considering the majority gaze when presenting themselves, either resisting it, as this interviewee, or catering to it.

Nothing is in itself heritage: heritage – including intangible cultural heritage (ICH) – is produced and performed (Smith 2006). Buildings, artefacts, or events need to be mediated as such before they become heritage (Gielen & Laermans 2005; cf. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004), even though this can take a broad variety

of forms, ranging from a plaque announcing that this is where some famous writer wrote her masterpiece, to a guide explaining local rituals to a tour group. Particularly when it is also a form of ‘cultural transmission’ – i.e. the ‘mediation [of] artefacts, notions, texts [...] from one culture in the context of another’ (Moenandar 2014) – we need to pay careful attention to the gestures, discourses, and media through which something is represented as heritage, and thereby constructed as being of value and interest (Gielen 2007). In this chapter, we analyse such transmission of two events in towns in Cornwall – Padstow May Day and Penzance Golowan midsummer celebrations – in the context of public discourse and the narratives and perspectives it constructs in mediating ICH. As we will show, perceptions about the events and the culture of which they are part are not static, but subject to an ongoing process of social construction that both shapes, and is potentially shaped by, imaginaries and preconceptions.

As Van Rekom and Go (2006) have argued, tourism can lead to an increase in status and distinctiveness for minoritised cultures and, in turn, increase resilience and identification with that culture among its members. And yet tourists’ presence can also be problematic or harmful (e.g. Ballengee-Morris 2002; Bunten 2008; Kirtsoglou & Theodossopoulos 2004). Even when the power relationship between minoritised culture and national majority is more ambiguous, the dynamics often remain uneasy. Cornwall is physically and economically peripheral in the UK: tourism brings around £2bn to its economy each year, a double-edged sword for social and cultural identity. Its popularity as a tourist destination, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic in which UK travellers sought holidays or longer-term ‘escapes’ from cities, has led to holiday rentals and second homes displacing local populations and creating a market in which many local buyers cannot compete, and tenants are evicted to make way for the more lucrative holiday market. This has led to division and a great deal of generalised resentment towards incomers.

Alongside this socio-economic context, another aspect of Cornwall’s relationship with tourism is the way in which, in the tourist gaze, the region and its inhabitants can become a spectacle. Rather than voicing elements of Cornishness that many who identify as Cornish would argue are key identity markers, stereotyped narratives of Cornwall abound, with pirates, quaint seaside villages, or rugged mining communities as romanticised representations that have a long tradition in depictions of the region by outsiders (e.g. Deacon 1997; Moseley 2013). These narratives are readily available in the imaginaries of popular culture: in television programmes such as *Doc Martin* (ITV 2004–2022), *Poldark* (BBC 2015–2019); or the myriad of programmes accompanying celebrities as they walk, drive, or move into idyllic Cornish landscapes. There is often a similarity between some depictions of the Cornish ‘Other’ as representing the strange – both reprehensible and desirable (Spivak 1985: 255) – and depictions of the ‘Orient’ that Edward Said discussed in his seminal work on the topic. As Said puts it, it is especially in descriptions of the encounter between representants of the West and the Orient that the dichotomy between the two is established, as Western visitors approach ‘Orientals’ and their customs ‘almost in the manner of an audience seeing a dramatic event unfold’ (Said 1995: 131). Such representations, juxtaposed to the bemused Western onlooker,

stem from the conviction that there is a fundamental difference between both, a conviction that is, at the same time, confirmed by them. It is in such encounters that the assumed difference between both parties becomes most pronounced – and that is exactly the purpose that these representations serve: 'both East and West fulfil their destinies in the encounter' (Said 1995: 131). The questions we pose in this chapter, then, are: in the ICH encounter that is promised to visitors on hospitality and tourism websites of Cornwall, which 'destinies' are prescribed for both parties? What are the likely ramifications on visitors' perspectives and expectations of the minority culture and its heritage practices?

### **Mapping the mediation of minority intangible cultural heritage**

Before giving our analysis, we first introduce a model with which the discursive positioning of minority ICH targeted at a majority audience can be mapped (cf. Kockel et al. (2020: 6) on home and public identities). If we look closer at the quotation with which we started this chapter, we see that in this encounter between tourist and local, between outsider and insider, two aspects regulate the way in which the ICH is made sense of by both. First, the interviewee reacts against the word 'festival', as it arguably turns May Day into something visitors *already know*: it normalises the event for them, and turns it into something that, according to the interviewee, it is not. Second, the interviewee speaks about a 'vibe' that is created by describing the event as a festival. This points to another regulating aspect, more implicit here: the perspectives available for (majority) people from which to relate to the event. Visitors to a music festival may reasonably expect to be entertained: the performances are staged for their benefit, and they can be thought of as its insiders and that is why the interviewee seems uneasy with this description (as another interviewee puts it, 'It's not being performed for anyone' (K85)). This representational strategy, where the boundaries of distinctiveness and belonging are discursively collapsed, is the opposite from that described at the end of the preceding section, where Cornwall and the Cornish are presented by majority narratives as strange and exotic.

Thus, in its mediation to majority audiences, there seem to be two ways in which minority ICH can be related to the majority culture within which it is embedded: (1) by assuming perspectives of self and other, and (2) by assuming positions of integration and rejection. The first corresponds to a dichotomy introduced by Bakhtin (1981), in which he posits two opposing ways of dealing with linguistic variation: centripetal and centrifugal. Adapting Bakhtin's terms, a *centripetal* representation of what, from a majority standpoint, amounts to 'other people's' ICH, aims at 'guaranteeing a certain maximum of mutual understanding' (Bakhtin 1981: 171). This representational strategy denies the ICH a life of its own, and pulls it *towards* the dominant culture. This can be done either by glossing over any differences between the two cultures, or through appropriating it, leading to subjugation, or 'enslavement', as Bakhtin calls it (Bakhtin 1981), of the minoritised ICH to the dominant culture. A *centrifugal* representation, instead, pushes the ICH *away* from the dominant culture, in a process of 'decentralization and disunification' (Bakhtin

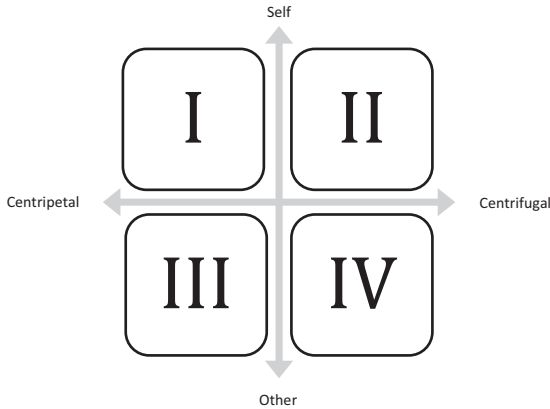


Figure 4.1 Mapping the mediation of minority intangible cultural heritage.

1981: 272). Here, the difference and autonomy of other people's ICH is acknowledged and foregrounded. Alongside this assumption of the ICH's proximity to (or distance from) a majority culture, there is, secondly, also a sense that the implied majority audience is positioned somewhere on a scale encompassing an insider (where the ICH aligns with their sense of Self) and outsider (where the ICH feels Other) spectrum.

These two ways of conceptualising the relationship between minority ICH and the majority culture regulate both how it is presented to majority audiences, and how it is potentially made sense of and positioned by those audiences. We can visualise these two ways as (1) a scale with centripetal and centrifugal as its opposite poles; and (2) a scale from self to other. If we present these as two crossing lines, we get the model shown in Figure 4.1.

The horizontal axis charts the extent to which the heritage is represented as having a place in the majority culture or not – the extent, as we said, to which the ICH is pulled to, or pushed away from, a dominant culture. The vertical axis plots the extent to which a majority audience member is invited to internalise the heritage as part of their majority identity (cf. Jeuring (2016) who creates a similar model for the analysis of regional tourism marketing based on the encounter between the global and the local, and the type of tourists that the marketing is aimed at). It is important to stress that the ensuing forms of mediation of minority heritage are ideal-typical – that is to say, the borders between the different types and their manifestations may not always be so clear-cut, and actual mediations will likely move up and down the two scales.

In their purest form, however, these ideal-types may look something like this. Type I (Self-Centripetal) represents appropriation of the minority heritage by the majority. The ICH no longer belongs to 'them' (the minority), but to 'us' (the gazing majority). This type constructs majority and minority as belonging to a common culture – 'us' is made to include 'them' in a universalised notion of humanity's heritage where the boundaries between cultures vanish; or, the majority has made

the ICH its own and has come to perceive it as not just something it owns, but part of its own culture. Type II (Self-Centrifugal) assumes that the heritage is not alien to the majority audience, but nevertheless is not something they would consider as part of their current identity. Often, this is embedded in a rhetoric where the ICH resembles the majority culture's past (cf. Hafstein 2012). The mediation might, for instance, present the minority culture as 'backwards', or 'old-fashioned'. This can be done negatively, presenting the culture as still in the dark ages, for instance; however, this may also be more positive, such as suggesting that the minority culture retains something that the majority culture has lost with modernisation. Type III (Other-Centripetal) resembles Type I in that it reflects appropriation by the majority, but the distinctiveness of the ICH remains such that is still ostensibly presented as 'other' from the majority culture. Thus, a clear distinction between insiders and outsiders is maintained, but with the suggestion that the minority ICH has some kind of use value for the outsiders – either positively, as it may offer enriching experiences, or yield new perspectives; or more problematically, as a commodified product. Type IV mediation (Other-Centrifugal), finally, presents the minority heritage as belonging to an unknown and unknowable Other. For members of the majority it is, at best, a source of wonder and bemusement; at worst, a kind of freak show.

The way the interviewee quoted above interprets them, descriptions of May Day as a Glastonburyesque festival can be located somewhere between Types I and III. The normalising of the event as a festival for a majority audience suggests Type I, a discursive erasure in which the event is subsumed into a majority cultural frame of reference and ownership. But the 'vibe' that results in people coming to gaze at the ICH also makes the interviewee uneasy – as they say elsewhere, 'it feels as though people have come to watch you' – moving the event along the scale where the heritage gazed upon is different from that of the majority and an object of curiosity for them, more resembling Type III. This is in line with the romanticised touristic gaze that Cornwall — alongside Frisia, the Livonian Coast, and other regions in the European peripheries where we find historical minorities (Urry 1990; Jensma 2018) – has, historically and contemporaneously, been subject to. This gaze can become further exoticised to fall within Type IV. There also seems to be discomfort, in the quote, about who gets to decide how the ICH is presented to the majority audience. An unease, in other words, with a more or less authorised heritage discourse (Smith 2006), which has mostly been shaped by outsiders. Such narratives are given currency by the imaginaries already in place, while they equally serve to reinforce them.

### **Cornish events in the public discourse**

In this section, we consider public discourse relating to the events under study, focusing on how they are mediated in the media and on tourism and hospitality websites, alongside our own interviews with those involved in the events. The media dataset comprises the results of a Google search for 'Padstow May Day' and 'Golowan' within websites with substantive (i.e. more than a single line or calendar entry)

informational content. Although clearly not a comprehensive picture of the overall discursive manifestation of these events, nevertheless they provide a snapshot of the ‘rich range of readily accessible stories and perspectives’ (Hodsdon 2022) that are likely to be encountered in the course of quotidian engagement with them, and so provides a multifaceted corpus for analysis (Jaworska & Kinloch 2018). The content is interrogated via critical discourse analysis, revealing ‘representations of aspects of the world which [...] contribute to establishing, maintaining, and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation’ (Fairclough 2003). As an approach to textual analysis, it involves interrogating language at a micro level (Fairclough 1995), thus enabling even a seemingly innocuous description to be understood in the context of the wider dynamics at play. However, CDA alone is only one piece of the discursive jigsaw (Bartlett 2017; Martin 2004; see also Koreinik & Hodsdon, this volume), with what has been called ‘positive’ discourse analysis providing a useful complement in showing how alternative discourses are shaped and deployed. As has been argued, ‘peripheries need to have the agency to create their own knowledges about their regions, independently of peripheralising core representations of place...’ (Willett 2018: 498). The CDA is therefore triangulated and complemented with primary data from our interviews with event ‘insiders’, enabling their voices to respond to – and potentially contest – outsider discourse.

#### *Whose heritage? Categorisation and perspective*

As we have now seen several times, at the most basic level there is often ambiguity around what exactly is being talked about when we talk about minority ICH. The Golowan website has ‘Golowan festival’; Padstonians know their event as ‘May Day’. But the dataset contains a multitude of negotiations and framings of where the event is culturally situated. The connotations of whichever word is chosen – festival, event, tradition, ritual – can act as the discursive template for further content, evoke particular connotations, and potentially shape attitudes and behaviour. *Golowan* in Cornish means ‘feast of St John’, a Christian feast day that has different connotations from the pagan origins of its role as a midsummer festival; and different again from a food or music festival. As with the Padstow example above, one Golowan interviewee was alert to the potential for misalignment: ‘What do you call Golowan? I try and avoid “festival” because *it makes it sound like you’re off to Glastonbury*’ (K77 – our emphasis here and throughout). Another Padstow insider described the potential for comparison with other well-known festivals: ‘People are like, *is it like Notting Hill?*’ and the commensurate need for them to negotiate and define May Day in those terms ‘I’m like, no, *I don’t think it is, no: it’s more*, because everybody’s involved’ (K85). One of the issues with the word ‘festival’, clearly, is its ambiguity: it may evoke links to the solar calendar or other natural or pagan connections; but in a normative context, many people are more likely to think of music or food festivals (as indeed our interviewees did when asked what other ICH events they had been to) – and this ambiguity is aptly demonstrated by the varying vocabulary used by field interviewees at the two events. Asked if they are enjoying themselves, one tourist at Golowan replies ‘Absolutely,

it's a fantastic *initiative*' (K73): where 'initiative' evokes a public sector discourse, a place-making intervention rather than something owned and organically lived as heritage. One of those responsible for reviving Golowan in 1990 chooses 'tradition' as their preferred description (K80) – and indeed even in the space of one generation it is clear from our data that it is passed on intergenerationally. Similarly, a Padstonian interviewee agrees, 'It's a tradition, I'll call it a tradition' (K86), although the disclaiming modification ('I'll call it') points to a lack of shared currency of the word within the insider community, as well as projecting a temporality that guards against the obligation to reproduce it in future uses. Another describes May Day as 'like a big party, but it's *a party with a bit more meaning*' (K88). To some – and the interviewee is referring to other local people – there has evolved a vernacular way of referring to Golowan where 'Some people *don't even know it's called Golowan: to them it's "Mazey"*. You get down to the prom and have a good time' (K92). This detachment reveals the ambiguity of the ICH context itself in its tension between its existence as an un-selfconscious, everyday cultural practice, and its metacultural status as a heritage object (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004). Even within a small sample of insiders, the event can mean very different things.

This ambiguity is also evident in discussions about ICH more broadly, as mentioned above. Asking field interviewees what other sorts of ICH they engaged with, even establishing a shared understanding as the basis for the interview was a challenge. The discursive object remains elusive, needing extra definition – the distinction between traditional practices passed on by communities and groups, and events that are not heritage so much as commerce and active place-making. Examples came to interviewees' minds such as 'The *Looe food festival* that we went to, that was particularly good' (K17). And this already-familiar term 'festival' is reflected in the media dataset as a general discourse of normativity. At Golowan, according to the BBC, 'The *line-up* this year is *jam packed*' – a description that would not be amiss of Glastonbury; a holiday park describes activities that could be found at any town, at any time: 'The festival has a *packed programme* of artists in celebration of *music, performing arts and theatre*' (Beachside Holiday Park). The distinctiveness of Cornish – or Penzancian – heritage is discursively erased in these descriptions' normalised language. Again, the boundary between merely ambiguous semantics and an increasingly ethically dubious co-option of heritage looms. On one tourism website, May Day is packaged as a visitor attraction that is 'zany', open to 'anyone' and 'free' to access. It then invites visitors to attend: 'What are you doing for Obby Oss 2023?' (Proper Cornwall) – even though as an event run for and by locals the right to extend an invitation is far from clear (as Hodsdon, Ozolina & Zijlstra discuss, this volume). Although these normative descriptions are to some extent understandable – both events do after all include a funfair, food trucks, and other such attractions common at other types of festival – it is useful to question the broader effect of this incomplete picture that discursively erases difference; and in so doing may miss an opportunity to articulate and celebrate a distinctive local culture whose voice is marginalised in relation to the national majority.

The fact that there *is* something clearly distinctive in the practices at both these events – most notably the paganesque 'oss' ('horse'-like) figures, and the dances

specific to each context – means that they are not always simply slotted into this normative paradigm. We might expect, then, to see something of this in the descriptions. Indeed we do – but it is striking how the presentation of these non-normative traits is manifest in the discourse. They range from evoking discourses of discovery via a somewhat exoticising tone, ‘with *traders* selling *all manner of goods* as well as food from all around the world *to delight the taste buds*’ (Kenegie Manor). Another describes ‘food stands with *world* and *Cornish* foods’ (Sea Swim Cornwall): that is, anything *but* normative. Elsewhere, we find clearer exoticising language: ‘...you hear the *thudding of the drums*, the *repeated rhythmic trance* echoes its way around, *people* dance, *people* sing and *people* drink’ (Sail Lofts Apartments). Mention of ‘drums’ and ‘repeated rhythmic trance’, and the raw immediacy of the tricolon of ‘people...’ locate the practice in an othering, exoticising gaze. *Penglaz*, the Penzance Oss, is a horse’s skull with a foliage garland and as such does strike a somewhat unusual figure. But, in this description from a tourism website, not the Oss but the *people themselves* are described in archaic, othering terms: a ‘throng of townfolk’ is led by *Penglaz* with ‘torches aloft’ through ‘the moonlit streets’, the description arguably evoking a mob of medieval peasants more than anything at all contemporary (Cornwall Guide). And again, an article in *Folklore Thursday* about May Day claims that ‘*There remains a lingering belief* that any woman captured beneath the apron of the ‘Oss will be married or pregnant within the year’ (James 2019). One author visiting Penzance draws more explicitly on an authorised heritage discourse exhorting their readers to ‘grab your good *seafaring Cornish pirate*’, since ‘some Cornish folklore experiences are worth reinventing, particularly the ones that go with a *certain swash and buckle*’ (Burns 2015). The visitor can even ‘expect to see the town filled with *a few Jack Sparrow lookalikes!*’ This appeal to the language of popular culture functions as a ‘translation’ to a wider audience situating the sights into familiar terms, while at the same time retaining a promise of sheer weirdness.

This uncertain placement of the non-normative content relative to contemporary majority time and space, shifting between types III and IV, also manifests in other ways. For some, it is a contemporary practice: in this example conveyed via present tense: ‘Golowan [...] *means* the Feast of St John and *it is* on St John’s Eve [...] that the *festivities begin for this revived tradition* (Cornwall Guide) – ‘revived tradition’ acknowledging the complex temporality of the event. For others, it appears as an anachronistic window into a culture frozen in the past, archaic language stating that ‘Padstow will be *making merry the old-fashioned way* with its famous Obby Oss’ (Cornish Traditional Cottages), or that ‘The town is *bedecked* in flags and greenery’ (Boutique Retreats). For yet others, it seems to be more of a self-conscious re-enactment of that past, acknowledging that ‘Although [Golowan] is an old tradition, it was revived by a group of artists and local schools in 1991 *in order to remember* the local area’s heritage’ (Purely Penzance).

### ***Whose performances? Actors and audiences***

Another important element of the public discourse is who the events are *for*: who participates, who spectates, what their relative roles are, and how might

they negotiate them. Some websites stress inclusivity: a Penzance-based website describes its festivals throughout the year which 'provide spectacles and entertainment *for both locals and visitors alike*' (Purely Penzance). Other examples cast locals as the central actors, at Golowan where 'Penzance comes alive with colour and *the people of the town enjoy* a feast of celebrations' (BBC). Many authors nevertheless do not hesitate to insert themselves as actors in the construction of audience-performer. Some use the second person, addressing the reader directly: '*I am sure if you follow* Cornish Culture *you have heard of* the Golowan Festival' and assuring them that the author can provide the necessary insight: '*If you don't know* Golowan – read on!' (Kenegie Manor). The intimate and confiding tone gives a sense of including and even inculcating the interlocutor into an insidership, regardless of the author's positional authority to enact such inclusion. A similar effect is achieved elsewhere by imperative verbs, which evoke the discourse of 'must see' tourism destinations in which decisions about where and how to interact are discursively removed from the visitor. A holiday cottage agency exhorts its customers to '*Imbibe* west Cornwall's artistic landscape' at Golowan (Aspects Holidays); another to '*See* Penzance come alive with dance, music and fun in Cornwall's biggest street festival!... *Spend time* on the harbourside...' (Porthleven Holiday Cottages). In both instances, the authors' language positions them as insider, addressing themselves to the constructed-as-outsider visitor.

The nature of engagement in the examples so far has been spectating: but how does a visitor negotiate how and when to take part? This is much less clear. Even when verbs are imperative, there is something passive about the nature of the participation: visitors can '*Walk the promenade and enjoy* the atmosphere *or get involved in the streets* lined with thousands of people' (Porthleven Holiday Cottages). The apparent invitation here to 'get involved' only comprises becoming part of the gazing masses. Elsewhere are clearer signals that visitors are expected to remain observers: 'As well as the hundreds of *local performers taking part*, Golowan is pleased to welcome a host of *national and international artists visiting to participate*' (Visit Cornwall TV). At the furthest end of these signals about participation are clues about how to negotiate the locals, one holiday rentals company warning that 'Mazey Day is *loud. It's wild, untamed* and oftentimes won't make sense' (Sail Lofts Apartments). Another local website advises that Quay Fair Day 'has a much more *laid back* feel to it and *is an ideal day to be part of* the celebrations' (Purely Penzance): avoiding the locals may be to visitors' advantage. Indeed, an outsider gaze is sometimes constructed more explicitly, drawing attention to the crowds to create a sense that here is a spectacle to be gazed upon: '*Thousands of people line the streets to watch* local schools, artists and community groups parade' (Porthleven Holiday Cottages); or promising '*the chance to see* what the local schools and colleges have created [...] they're *a sight to behold*' (Sail Lofts Apartments).

An outsider gaze is also constructed in the nature and amount of information given. Some examples purporting to share information ironically display a lack of it, omitting explanations of esoteric terms and so maintaining the distance between audience and descriptive object. Visit Cornwall describes how 'The "*os-ses*", swirling and dancing proceed through Padstow's streets *taunted by a Teazer*'

(Visit Cornwall); a holiday cottage company speaks of ‘events such as *Mazey Eve*, the election of *the Mock Mayor* of the Quay, *Penglaz*, Penzance’s own ‘*Obby ‘Oss*’ (Boutique Retreats). No gloss is given of these terms. Others seek to establish their own insiderness by appearing to reveal local specialist knowledge: ‘May Day (or ‘*Obby ‘Oss Day as it is known*) is the biggest day in Padstow’s calendar’ (Visit Cornwall). However, as one interviewee from Padstow said:

I get annoyed when they call it Obby Oss Day: it’s May Day. “Come to Padstow Obby Oss festival” – things like that annoy me, as they don’t really know what they’re talking about. But because they are quoting it on their website, the people that come down think that that’s true, because they think that the people who own the holiday house live here.

(K88)

The implied outsider discourse self-perpetuates, disconnected from insider reality: this is not only a conceptual gap but also one that has real potential implications for visitors’ understanding of and appropriate engagement with the event.

### **Mediating heritage**

We opened this chapter by observing a potential issue that can arise when (majority) authors mediate minority ICH. Having the power and voice to name a thing equates to the power to shape what that thing *is*, and can result in ICH becoming a different ‘thing’ to the majority than it is to the minority. And as our subsequent analysis has suggested, it is not only the naming but the descriptive content and positioning of the way heritage is mediated that has the power to shape the nature of the event and its relationality to a majority audience. In the examples presented here are differently constructed gazes that map onto the model presented above. We can plot these mediations as moving between the different ideal-types, variously landing or shifting along the axes from centripetal to centrifugal, and from self to other. In Type I (self-centripetal) sit the normative descriptions of ‘jam-packed line-ups’, family fun, and food festival comparisons. In the context of marginalised cultures’ ICH – especially those whose group identity claims are contested or erased – this representational strategy risks negating claims to distinctiveness, along with broader societal awareness and respect for the group and its right to express itself culturally, socially, or politically. Into Type II fall those instances where heritage is constructed as belonging to the majority cultures’ past or future: archaic descriptions of ‘thronging’ townfolk with torches aloft, ‘making merry’, or superstitious beliefs. Waterton and Smith note this ‘unpleasant paradox’ where heritage is ‘on the one hand something confined to the past or those who are excluded or “underdeveloped”, and on the other, something to lament’ (Waterton & Smith 2010: 7). In Type III are gazes as a ‘sight to behold’, although also potentially more positively valued descriptions such as ‘revived traditions’ taking place in the present, for the benefit of the tourist seeking to expand their horizons or be enriched by their holiday experiences. Type IV comprises those instances where

heritage is Other: this is clearly manifest here in the exoticising language describing 'traders' or 'thudding drums'.

At one extreme, then, lies a discourse of the self-same that pulls the minority ICH in and emphasises the shared habitus of both majority and minority in such a way as to discursively erase the minority's cultural distinctiveness. At another lies a focus on the different-other that pushes away the ICH and over-exaggerates and potentially exoticises cultural distinctiveness. This lack of consistency in the discursive construction of ICH events seems to some extent to reflect broader conceptions of ICH (or the lack of) in the UK. The sometimes uncomfortable relationship between ICH as, on the one hand, heritage construct and, on the other, as everyday, lived experience has been frequently noted. But also, as suggested in the opening section of this chapter, the AHD in the UK has not allowed for ICH to sit comfortably or confidently alongside tangible heritage within the national imaginary of its own heritage context (see Smith & Waterton 2009). In the face of the inherently elusive discursive object of 'ICH' in general, and the absence of a broader discursive framework to describe ICH in the UK, it is perhaps unsurprising that there is no clear strategy shaping the positions and perspectives that authors take up in mediating minority ICH. There are other ambiguities at play, too, in the realm of identity boundaries. As discussed by Hodsdon (this volume), there is no clear-cut boundary in this context between 'insider' and 'outsider', or national majority and a minoritised group within. Rather, the continuum wherein individuals (and indeed the heritage itself) are *both* Cornish *and* British; *both* distinct *and* same – in ways that may shift even within an individual according to context – may also contribute to the inconsistency of the way the ICH is manifest in the public discourse.

Assuming a majority authorship, it is germane to ask what the impact of othering language could be upon majority perceptions of an already marginalised culture. But there are examples of this discourse being produced by insiders, too: the author of the Sail Lofts Apartments article about Golowan states that they are a Penzance local. Casting the event into Type IV could represent an inculcation into the majority standpoint resulting in a 'self-orientalism' (Olsen 2008) manifesting a lack of confidence; or it could be a more deliberate tactic of strategic essentialism (Spivak 1985), to assert difference in the face of historic and contemporary erasure of that cultural distinctiveness. As van Rekom and Go (2006) describe, differentiation in an insider—outsider interaction context can yield positive benefits to social identification processes. And just as strategic essentialism may be reacting to a Type I majority gaze, the bifurcating discourse can also lead to the contrary assertion, negating difference from a minority standpoint. In a TripAdvisor exchange (2019), a traveller from India asks where to 'experience Cornish culture', and responses from people located in Cornwall become increasingly heated in asserting the very sameness that a strategic essentialism would deny: 'You seem to think that 'visiting' will provide a cultural experience. I'm afraid it won't, people in Cornwall live their lives in the same way as people all over the UK and the World in general. It is not a reservation or theme park' (TA user 'Penmere'). In this instance, minority voices mediating their own ICH by asserting a self-centripetal (Type I) positioning are reacting against a (perceived) majority Type IV discourse – not,

presumably, primarily of the original poster themselves but sedimented over time from an awareness of the ever present majority gaze. Eventually, someone changes mediation tack, and offers a suggestion for a pub where the visitor might watch a Cornish folk music session – shifting back into a more positive Type III. The result is a reproduction of the ambiguities of the public discourse in general, with minority cultural voices both asserting and denying distinctiveness.

This shifting sense of simultaneous sameness and otherness might also be reflected in what appears to be the audience of this discourse: tourists, or event outsiders from within Cornwall. Edensor argues that tourism, ‘because it is not separate from the quotidian, is an exemplary site for an exploration of the ways in which the everyday is replete with unreflexive practice and habit but simultaneously provokes desires for unconfined alterity’ (Edensor 2007: 201) and suggests that tourists are not simply seeking the exotic ‘other’, but navigate this via their own normative, everyday practices. Despite the search for liminality and touristic experiences as ‘culturally coded escape attempts’, this ‘central [paradox] of tourism’ is tempered by the need for the safety of the normative, ‘for while the confrontation of alterity is desired, the disruption this creates can engender self-doubt or self-consciousness, not conducive to having a good time’ (Edensor 2007: 202). Faced with ambiguity of both content and audience expectations, it is perhaps not surprising that the discourse veers between different ontological framings and the commensurately varying positionalities of the gaze. As minority groups seek to carve out a place in a contemporary Europe which reflects active participation in modern society alongside their continuing traditions, the discursive positioning of their heritage is not without practical consequence. The active role of such discourse in shaping outsider perceptions imbues it with an ethical imperative given its potential to shape behaviours, future discursive acts, and broader perceptions of the minority culture and others like it. It might be posited that an ideal scenario is for the minority culture to always be involved in shaping and voicing the narratives that are presented about them. But even if desirable, this is not a realistic recommendation, due to the proliferation of content and platforms available, as well as the obvious burden on representatives of that culture on policing the way they are described. Instead, then, we propose that a version of the model we present in this chapter might be proactively used by both minority and majority discursive actors as a tool to articulate and assess the way that they are voicing minority ICH. This, we suggest, offers a pathway for more appropriate discourse that is fully reflective of how a minority culture might fruitfully and ethically be voiced, whatever the positionality of the author. Types II and III arguably offer the more measured balance of sameness and distinctiveness. Although there is potential for an unwanted gaze, in Type III there also exists the potential to mediate minority heritage in a way that adds positively to social identification processes that provide potential resilience for the culture, rather than risk erasing or othering it. Here, heritage remains ‘theirs’, but – where this is treated respectfully and not co-opted – can widen ‘our’ horizons, provide enriching experiences, and give new perspectives. Likewise, while Type II risks rendering paternalistic perspectives on a culture stuck

in the past, it can also offer an enriching insight into aspects of modern society that have been lost, potentially to its detriment. As one Padstonian pointed out,

Why do you [celebrate May Day]? It's just what you do. [...] Almost the question should be turned around: why it isn't happening elsewhere? [...] So much of this is taking as the normal situation something that is in fact nothing of the sort. Those who create the discourse happen to be in that situation, therefore that is taken as the normal status quo. It certainly isn't the status quo for probably the majority of people on earth.

(K86)

While Types II and III are likely to be the most appropriate positions adopted by majority authors, that is not to say they are the only possible perspectives: as we noted above, the availability of Types I and IV to minoritised authors provides a means to contest reductive majority narratives, whether via strategic essentialism or countering exoticisation.

Proactively reflective heritage mediation can thus potentially allow national minority ICH to be understood and engaged with appropriately, with its distinctiveness acknowledged but not overstated, both in the nature of that engagement and in the positionality that one might adopt towards it. Revoicing ICH and contemporary socio-cultural practice via reflective mediation in this way, whatever the positionality of the author, could enable a more nuanced, thoughtful discourse around minority heritage so as to enable the majority to see it as belonging to a rich, contemporary culture; and the minority to feel that their culture is truly seen.

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# 5 Intangible cultural heritage as a tool for sustaining language

## A Livonian case study

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Culture and language have complex and intertwining connections, the relationship between them characterised by reciprocal dependence (Gład 2022: 5). In large communities, language tends to be such an integral part of cultural processes and everyday life that its presence is perceived as something rather obvious. But for minoritised and endangered cultures, global trends such as urbanisation, territorial dispersion, the end of protective geographical isolation, globalisation, and expansion of the digital space increasingly impact upon these cultural processes. As such, minoritised cultural communities are increasingly fragile and vulnerable. The rapid loss of languages is part of a larger process in which politically dominant languages and cultures, particularly in the context of modern nation states, can simply overwhelm minoritised (often indigenous) ones (Hale 1992: 35). The relationship between language and culture – as well as the place of a language in the ecosystem of a community and its heritage (Kramersch 2003: 4–6) – thus becomes especially relevant and complex in the context of marginalised and endangered communities, and discussion on where and how language is used in the context of the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) of such communities comes more into focus.

Language and ICH are, if not one and the same, then two sides of the same coin (cf. Nic Craith & O'Rourke 2015). Language is notably not included in the UNESCO 2003 Convention (ICHC), which states that language 'cannot be considered per se as a manifestation of intangible cultural heritage [but] could qualify as such if it becomes a means for the manifestation of what already belongs to the domain of intangible cultural heritage' (Scovazzi 2012: 182, cit. Ubertazzi 2020: 62). Despite entries where language is a core element (for instance, 'Language, dance and music of the Garifuna' (Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua), 'Whistled language of the island of La Gomera' (Canary Islands)), it is nevertheless seen as a *tool* for transmission of ICH (Nic Craith, Kockel & Lloyd 2019). But whether a language is transmitted through ICH or as a language *per se* has potentially different implications for participation, due to factors such as the nature of engagement (language classes or grammar books versus singing or attending a festival), the commitment required, or the porosity of community boundaries (for the latter see Moenandar, Moran-Nae & Hodsdon, this volume).

In this chapter, we consider the inter-relation of language, ICH, and participation in a Livonian context, to explore how members of a severely endangered

culture can navigate these complex domains, and so offer some clues for building resilience in similar communities. Using data from interviews conducted for the *Re:voice* project (see Appendix 2), field observations, and our previous research, we explore the language–ICH interface to consider inclusion and exclusion in the context of the future of an endangered language. We aim to better understand how, in a cultural and linguistic ecosystem so closely imbricated with majority identities, perspectives, and other cultural practices, minority cultures can meaningfully and realistically navigate the various forces at play.

### **The Livonian context**

Livonians are an officially recognised indigenous<sup>1</sup> people of Latvia. Livonian is a Uralic language and, therefore, significantly different from the majority language of the country – Latvian – which belongs to the unrelated Indo-European language family. At its height during the 11th–13th centuries, the Livonian-speaking area covered nearly one-third of present-day Latvia. During the following era it increasingly merged with surrounding Baltic linguistic varieties forming the contemporary Latvian language (Ernštreits V 2023) and leaving vast Livonian strata in the pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical features of Latvian (Rudzīte 1996). This also defines the multifaceted relationship between Livonians and Latvians: on one hand they are completely different cultures, especially language-wise; on the other, they are two branches of the same stem, as Latvian language and culture involves many Livonian components and many Latvians are indeed closer or more distant descendants of Livonians. Throughout the centuries Livonian itself declined, surviving only in remote areas. After the mid-19th century, these had shrunk to an isolated coastal strip along the northern coast of the Courland peninsula, inhabited by 2500 Livonians (Ernštreits 2023), known today as the Livonian Coast. Both world wars greatly disrupted this last Livonian-speaking area, but Soviet occupation completely destroyed it: forcing the Livonian community to leave, scattering it across Latvia and abroad, and halting nearly all language transmission (Ernštreits 2019). The detachment of the Livonian community from its historical area, its overwhelming exposure to the majority, and its small size severely threaten the sustainability of its intangible heritage and language. Presently, it is one of Europe’s most critically endangered languages (Moseley 2014: 64) and only about 20–30 individuals can hold a conversation in Livonian. According to estimates, the actual number of those who identify with their Livonian origins, however, varies between 1000 and 2000 people.<sup>2</sup> These individuals reside primarily in Rīga, the capital of Latvia, or in Ventspils, the city nearest to the Livonian Coast, but also in other areas including the Livonian Coast itself.

As a result of these disrupting and fragmenting forces, there has been a lack of opportunities and very few domains of language use, such that Livonian therefore no longer functions as a language of communication. In turn, this has led to a lack of motivation to acquire it, which has made it impossible to acquire and maintain fluency, and this has been a mutually reinforcing cycle: as one interviewee told us, they ‘didn’t learn Livonian, which doesn’t function anymore in the society, [as]

there was a lack of motivation' (L1). One of the reasons historically has also been Livonian being already somewhat 'othered' due to its differences from Latvian and seen as a language of 'strangers' – and so one interview respondent described that, when Livonian was still common in the Livonian Coast (around 80 years ago), 'Latvian kids mocked Livonian kids, they were ashamed of speaking Livonian' (L8). Until recently (the turn of the millennium) there has also been a widespread narrative amongst the general public that Livonians became extinct in the 12th century. As a result, there are people who acknowledge their Livonian origins but have felt that they 'don't want to talk about it in public' since even 'educated people even say that it is extinct, that it is nonsense' (L2). Before expulsion from the Livonian Coast, Livonian culture was distinctive in terms of its ways of life and intangible heritage. Under the increasing pressure of Latvian presence on the Livonian Coast, language – and proficiency in the language in particular – became a key marker of belonging to the Livonian community. As the boundary between the identity and cultural heritage of the minority (Livonians) and the majority (Latvians) became more blurred, it was language in particular that provided distinction.

And yet despite the disruption to transmission, with all the attendant impact on proficiency, language remains important, although in a different way. This is driven firstly by outsiders' narratives that presume that belonging to a different ethnic group inherently involves speaking a different language. One interviewee remarked that whenever they tell people they are Livonian, 'the first thing they ask is "Do you speak Livonian?"' (L24), with another relating a note of challenge: 'I have friends who say "[if you are a Livonian] why don't you speak Livonian then?'" (L29). Secondly – and for Livonians themselves – language is still a key element that indicates one's belonging to the Livonian community. It is no longer that they necessarily speak the language: what is more important is language proficiency within the family (parents, grandparents, etc.) that allows one community member to locate others who are completely dispersed and so have few, if any, opportunities to meet. Language serves here as a symbolic manifestation of belonging to the Livonian community, this symbolic role practically manifested in the form of short greetings and occasional expressions. One interviewee told us how 'We try to put it into a greeting, use some phrases' (L1); another that a putative 'code of ethics' for the Livonian republic would begin with such symbolic uses: 'when you are on the Livonian coast and you meet people, you should say hello, preferably in Livonian' (L3). But although respondents were positive about the importance of symbolic use, there remain barriers to language acquisition. Although archival resources do exist (such as collections of folklore, ethnography, and lifestories), the very lack of language proficiency itself limits their use as a source of acquisition of intangible heritage or learning materials.

### **ICH as a vehicle for language transmission**

In the face of these mutually reinforcing barriers to resilience and revitalisation, ICH has emerged as a key tool by which the language can be transmitted. This close association within the ecosystem of Livonian ICH was indeed acknowledged in the

application for inclusion of the Livonian cultural space in Latvia's National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which described the language as 'a pervasive element in the Livonian cultural space' in that 'almost no element of the cultural space could be imagined without its presence' while making clear that 'introducing the language always involves a broader introduction to Livonian culture by using traditional cultural sources (folklore, traditions, musical heritage, folktales, etc.) as well as newer cultural texts (Livonian literature, life stories, etc.)' (Ernštreits 2019). This positioning of language can be tracked historically. The first Livonian texts, including descriptions of folklore and traditions, were published in the 19th century specifically as language samples. The first poems in Livonian, composed in connection with these publications and also primarily as samples of language use, laid the foundations for Livonian literature traditions. With the growth of the Livonian community and its cultural activity in the 1920s and 1930s, new songs were created specifically to ensure that Livonian musical groups had a repertoire available to them in Livonian. The melodies of these songs were taken from the repertoires of related (e.g. Estonian, Finnish) nations or were written as original compositions with lyrics in Livonian. The 1970s saw the founding of Livonian choirs in Rīga and Ventspils, which became places to gather and practise Livonian intangible heritage for an exiled community during the oppressive circumstances of the Soviet occupation. Special attention was paid to Livonian language acquisition, which involved choir members whose first language was not Livonian, as well as use of Livonian as a language for everyday communication within the choirs (Vēri 1994).

This legacy is reflected in our dataset. For some respondents, it lends the language a particular emotional resonance: one interviewee described how 'in music [the language] sounds somehow special. It creates a kind of special atmosphere and a kind of heightened emotion' (L24); another described how, since their mother did not speak Livonian but sang it, 'the language rings in my heart and soul' so that 'it's more of a song language for me' (cited in Ernštreite and Zeltiņa (2023) *Lībiešu Kultūrtelpa* (hereafter LKT) 2023: 173). So while Livonian language is positioned by many of our informants as the main element to be preserved, other elements of ICH are positioned and chiefly valued as areas in which language is used: as one performer put it, 'There are those who speak Livonian, there are those who study Livonian, but we sing in Livonian' (Field notes). This is culturally pervasive, according to another interviewee: 'the Livonians are a people who cannot speak their own language as much as they can sing. It is a cultural phenomenon. Everyone can sing something in Livonian, even if they don't know the language' (L2). This is not only a historic means of transmission but also one that continues into the younger generation: one interviewee discussed her granddaughter's burgeoning interest in Livonian, who

isn't learning the language, but she knows a poem... a song [...] And she even taught it to a neighbour girl – a Latvian. I have it recorded in my phone, how they sang the Livonian song "Rikāz rānda" ("Rich Coast").

(LKT: 160)

Notable here is the ease with which a child interested in her Livonian roots was able to share these with a Latvian (presumably non-Livonian) neighbour. The communal nature of song in this instance enables outsider engagement and awareness by someone who is not Livonian, and in this distinction lies an important differentiation between modes of participation in ICH, and those of learning a language directly. In the next section, we examine these modes in more detail, and consider the implications of that interplay for the resilience of an endangered language.

### **Engagement with language at the Livonian Festival**

Taking the Livonian Festival and associated children's summer school as a case study, and incorporating data about other Livonian ICH, we consider ICH as a vehicle of language transmission and revitalisation within this ecosystem, and ask what the implications are of this somewhat 'reversed' model for the potential involvement (or not) of majority individuals or organisations, and correspondingly for the ethical and practical nuances of their participation (or non-participation).

The Livonian Festival has taken place annually on the Livonian Coast since 1989, when Livonians were able for the first time to return to the historical area as Soviet occupation neared its end (Ernštreits 2019). The festival tradition was started as a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the building of the Livonian National House. Such is its importance as a symbolic annual gathering for the scattered Livonian community, it has already acquired the status of 'tradition' that 'is part of Livonian culture' (L24) and is spoken of in terms of heritage despite its relatively short lifetime: 'the Livonian festival is something that has been inherited from the times when it was first celebrated' (L59). Another interviewee, asked what was the first thing they associated with Livonianness, replied, 'well, the Livonian festival on the first Saturday in August, of course' (L51). Closely linked to the Livonian Festival – and timed to run alongside it – is the Livonian children's and youth summer school, *Mierlinkizt*, whose attendees perform in the Festival. Since its inception in 1992, the purpose of the summer school has been to preserve Livonian identity and cultural uniqueness. The central element of the programme is Livonian language learning and use, accomplished primarily via Livonian language elements found in traditional and modern vocal culture as well as in the visual space created by the summer school participants (such as making posters in Livonian to put up in the classrooms and in local shops and cafes). Its programme is thus built around Livonian language, ICH, and creativity, and plays an important role in creating social ties and providing intergenerational connections in the absence of day-to-day contact within and through Livonian culture. These intergenerational connections, and the cultural collectivity they engender by creating a space for Livonian identity, are vividly described by a Festival attendee who also participated at the school as a lecturer:

Such a packed week on the Livonian Coast, that I have to say: good that there is work that I can throw myself into, otherwise it would be hard to fix this hole inside of me. I feel almost like I did 30 years ago coming back from

the Livonian children's camp with this ache, and I'm happy to see the same attitude in my children's faces today.

(Ernštreits D 2023)

With such an instrumental role in creating a space for people with Livonian heritage to forge and perform individual and collective cultural identity, what are the implications for outsiders on encountering and participating in this valued Livonian ICH?

### ***The Livonian Festival: performances and audiences***

One of the most readily apparent domains in which the interplay between members of the minority and majority can be observed is in the programming of the event itself. The tensions involved when ICH events become increasingly the subject of an outsider gaze have been much discussed (e.g. Fournier 2020): and in this context these negotiations have the potential to impact – whether positively or negatively – on language transmission as well as the event *qua* event. As the Festival has gained more attention from the outside as well as additional financial support, there has been a shift in priority towards the quality of performances. This drift is caused, on the one hand, by the lack of cultural resource discussed above: limited repertoire has led festival organisers to seek improvements. As one local Livonian told us, they ‘thought for a long time that it was the central festival of the summer’ but their enthusiasm waned when they ‘realise[d] that there is nothing new about it anymore’ (L24). It is not only the limited traditional repertoire leading to such a shift, however, but also the organisers’ imperative to attract an audience. Increasingly, this comprises newcomers to the Livonian Coast, tourists, and those interested in Livonian heritage: as one organiser told us, if the primary aim was to attract ‘local people.... It just doesn’t work’ and the shift to newcomers has necessitated ‘being able to interest them and, and more perhaps, to participate’, with focus on quality: ‘if there are concerts, if there are events, they have to be high level events. Then the hall is full’. This strategy has, according to this participant, paid off: ‘Last summer was a hundred percent proof of that – if there was quality, there were as many people as ever, no matter what. It was just very well attended’ (L14).

One of the effects of this shift, however, has been that material in Livonian has found itself in a secondary position in the programme, perhaps since performances created by local groups are seen as more amateur. And so for the past decade, the key performers at the Festival’s main concert have been neither local nor Livonian – although the material performed, whether traditional or newly created, has been generally based on Livonian language or themes. Even this, however, may be somewhat losing ground as performers switch to content in Latvian, even to Latvian traditional and modern musical pieces that have no connection with Livonian heritage at all. Conversely, singing groups performing Livonian material, including children from the summer school, have been given the stage during low-traffic times when the audience is likely to be small, integrated into events with a non-musical focus, or provided with a limited supporting role during the

main performances. For example, in the 2023 Livonian Festival, out of 10 musical groups performing Livonian ICH, only one was given a 15-minute individual slot during the daily programme; two performed at midnight at the bonfire located away from the main stage of the Festival; and two went on stage to support other musical pieces during the main performance. Stage time was, however, given for a full concert by a professional choir from Estonia and a folklore group from Finland, and the main performance was based on non-Livonian performers and contained a proportionally larger number of pieces without any connection to Livonian heritage. Perhaps ironically, these strategies potentially neglect the most important group of visitors to the Festival: the Livonian community members it was initially introduced for, many of whom are neither outsiders (in a cultural sense) nor locals (in a geographical one). As the Livonian community is scattered across the country, there are few opportunities for them to be in contact. This group are generally unconnected to the area and so often do not have a place to stay, and in early days the Festival was seen as a once-a-year get-together for the community members. Attending it was a “‘must’, planned long in advance, especially as for the majority of community members getting to the Festival meant travelling long distances. It was not only a place to get together and a manifestation of belonging to the Livonian community, but also central as a stage for Livonian performers who had generally lacked opportunities to perform for an audience best-placed to value their effort and creativity.

Thus a shift in a content is felt in the Livonian community. As two Livonian speakers from a nearby village described their feelings about attending the Festival: ‘Well, we do go [...] but there is no kind of uplifting feeling [...] that Livonians is missing; it is a kind of gathering, people come, watch the movie, some concerts, but I personally do not get this feeling’ (L29). Concern about the absence of Livonian language and ICH at the festival has been growing – as one Livonian social media user and renowned performer wrote after the 2023 Festival, they had enjoyed the collectivity of the event even ‘though the Livonian tongue was heard so little and few people were dressed in folk costumes’ (Stalte 2023). The same concern was repeated by yet another key actor online (Sile 2023). And the fact that opinions usually expressed person-to-person have started to appear in the public space is arguably an indicator in itself of the prevalence of this concern.

So event organisers wishing to promote awareness of Livonian culture are presented with something of a paradox (a dynamic also noted in a Frisian context, see Zijlstra, Aardema & Moenandar, this volume). There is a balance to be trodden between adapting programming to meet audience demand which, according to one Livonian local (L4), ‘is not from Livonians themselves, but from the people who live next door to them’ in the hope that this will galvanise interest since ‘when you are at a common event you see that there are many of you [...] but when you are alone, it is not seen as of value in everyday life’. They emphasise the crucial role of events in potentially reviving this interest, since ‘At the festival, you get a sense of identity again’ and so the value of ICH potentially lies in attracting new audiences – not only comprising outsiders, but (re-)engaging insiders too. Likewise, lack of language proficiency becomes a barrier to inclusive participation,

even amongst those of Livonian heritage: as one interviewee said about Latvia's UNESCO-listed Song and Dance Festival, 'there is a backlash' from participants because 'people don't understand the text, they are afraid' (L15). This can be alleviated by, for example, providing song sheets, as was done with the Livonian anthem 'Min Izāmō' during the opening ceremony, enabling anyone to follow along (see Hodsdon, Ozoliņa & Zijlstra, this volume) – a strategy that another participant encouraged: 'We should also involve more [people]' at the Festival bonfire since 'many people would love to take part, they just don't know [the words]. Maybe hand out the leaflets with the lyrics on them' (L39).

### ***Outsider involvement in the intangible cultural heritage ecosystem***

Such strategies may strike a balance to make the event more inclusive to non-Livonian temporary or permanent residents, whose presence may be important for longer-term cultural resilience. In response to an indifference amongst some people of Livonian heritage – as one local described their village, 'mostly they don't leave the house, they are not interested in anything' (L24) – there was widespread support for those with no previous connections to the Livonian Coast or Livonian heritage to be part of this cultural community of practice. One respondent observed that the audience of a village event was divided into groups of locals and newcomers and did not actively seek to include the latter, but acknowledged that holding the event in public space was inherently inclusive, since 'You can't forbid anyone to come to the sea and listen. He's come, so what – are you going to stop him from coming?', being clear that spatial boundaries are a key mechanism of exclusion, should that be desired: 'Then make it in your own backyard and then no stranger will come to listen' (L37) (for spatial inclusion and exclusion, see Frears & Hodsdon, this volume). Another felt that newcomers participating in village 'gatherings, celebrations, activities using Livonian elements' were just as valuable in their performative rather than essentialised identities, as 'they can be Chinese, Germans, that's not the point' (L1). Another argued for proactivity, noting that currently summer visitors are contributing 'almost nothing' to the community, and providing more opportunities for them to engage would 'involve [them] in something as well, so that they are interested' (L23). This involvement could just as equally be through language, since the linguistic 'insiderness' afforded by the closer similarity of Livonian to Finnish and Estonian means 'It would be good if Estonians, Finns, or anybody who bought property here who are already inside all this' developed 'something more linguistic around them. After all, it is the language that is most important' (L39). We were told of one individual who 'has compiled a Livonian book', and although 'nobody knows what his Livonian roots are' this was felt to be less important than the act itself: 'it doesn't matter, I suppose, if he's such an enthusiast' (L29). However, the effort and application required is less likely to be adopted wholesale by summer residents – whereas active engagement in events may well be. Not only events but also other forms of ICH can be a container for language, and highly accessible to outsiders. One canoe owner gave their canoes Livonian names, with the result that 'everybody has learnt them in two days already, even the correct pronunciation, while boating' (L58). Indeed ICH can

interact with other ICH: one maker of *sklandrauši* (carrot pies, a traditional Livonian pastry) related that they ‘suggested to one bus that was coming to eat my sklandrauši, I said there was a ‘Līvlist’ [Livonian musical group] concert, and they were the ones who filled the hall. A whole bus! If it wasn’t for the bus, the hall would have been empty’ (L24). Food, as a literally consumable and so inherently inclusive means to participate in minority culture, here acts as a gateway to engagement with songs, and so language, for outsiders who may not otherwise have done so. Come for the carrot pies, stay for the Livonian language.

Outsiders, then, seem welcome to join in Livonian ICH events, themselves imbricated closely with language. Given events’ role not only in community-forming but as a key means of language transmission, there is a strong implication that language is thus more accessible – even though this may remain symbolic – than it would be if language-learning took place separately from ICH. In the face of indifference amongst many local people, many interviewees voiced the feeling that outsiders’ integration in Livonian cultural life was an important means by which the ICH – here, of course, including language – could remain vital.

### *Transmitting Livonian into the future*

Not only newcomers are driving renewed interest in Livonian culture, but children and young people too: many interviewees felt that it is ‘the next generation who is much more interested’ (L57), perhaps related to a broader search for identity: ‘the young ones are finding something that is for them, and to be less bored, they are looking for something to be different’ (L27). The summer school, indeed, demonstrates the significance of language in contemporary Livonian cultural life; and like the Livonian Festival plays an important role in Livonian identity-building. One parent sends their child because ‘I thought it was important to be aware of the language, it is an ancestral language’, an awareness they explicitly relate to their own sense of identity, wherein ‘the more I learn about my ancestors, the stronger I become’ (L39). The energy brought by youth engagement is profound: one local told us that ‘our children are obsessed with Livonians – they are at the summer camp now’, and that this obsession is manifest through the songs they bring back: ‘I say “Here are some sweets, but in return: a song for me”. Then they were singing this duet’ (L28). One interviewee described those attending as having ‘ancestral roots’, but also ‘very often it is that they just start to live here’, accepting this reality while acknowledging that it can be uncomfortable for some: ‘it’s not something to be afraid of... it is just a different reality’ (L14). However, unlike the Festival itself, which takes place in public space, there are practical restrictions to the summer school such as logistics, available teachers, and accommodation places. These have an inevitable impact on the numbers the school is able to accommodate: ‘Of course we give priority to participants of previous camps’ (L16). This has led to prioritisation of those with Livonian heritage as well as those with strong motivation (motivational letters or schoolwork are taken into account during selection).

Positive though the younger generation's enthusiasm is, just as with newcomers this raises questions as to the content and means of language transmission: the challenges facing older generations in terms of linguistic resource and expertise still remain. Again, ICH is proving a vital medium to address this. Like the first Livonian poems in the mid-19th century, composed to open new domains for Livonian, today new cultural products are being created to expand the amount of cultural material available to 'teach the Livonian language class material better' (Field notes). In other words, the cultural and creative process serves the purposes of language preservation, usage, and development. While songs can be performed literally, on a stage, as in the Livonian Festival, they can also be a means of performing identity in a socially constructive sense, as groups use Livonian in song, rather than in a conversation class. Music groups are increasingly rehearsing and developing despite having few or no performances on stage. For example, a group from Ventspils ('Rāndalist') despite performing only two to three times annually at events, regularly rehearse completely new pieces in Livonian, including some written especially for them. The use of Livonian in the creative process in this way is highly valued as part of Livonian collective identity. Other new cultural products include songs, poetry (there are three poets currently writing in Livonian), and plays. Demand for new elements persists, creativity tied to the opinion that 'It's necessary to do something modern, so there's interest' (L6), combining the traditional and the modern as 'There has to be an evolution, so that there is a future; remembering your roots, but still there has to be new work too' (L13), since 'If we don't create anything new right now, then in one hundred years, there won't be anything to preserve' (L15). This has also included embracing new media and modes of creativity. One Livonian language teacher was positive about the existing musical repertoire but noted that 'The big downside is that there is no modern music' and suggested a new approach, since 'You need recorded music that sticks, that rings in your ears, so you can put it into TikTok: how to dance to a Livonian song' (L5), and indeed media and social networks are increasingly offering opportunities to use Livonian and interact with it while promoting Livonian to the general public. Modern culture can pave the way to direct engagement with language in a vibrant culture open to innovation. An organiser of the summer school recalled a 'great experience with rap!' in which two Finnish girls made and videoed a rap in Livonian, a creativity that is necessary 'to get these young people involved, to attract them, because music, of course, the language of music is already very, very, very attractive to people' (L16).

### **ICH as a transmitter of language: a path to resilience?**

While language can be a vehicle for ICH, then, this relationship can also be turned around so that ICH can be seen to function as a key tool to transmit language, and be more accessible for new audiences and language-learners. As well as the opportunities that ICH offers, however, there may also be pitfalls. For many Livonians, language possesses its own symbolic value worth preserving: 'It seemed important to me to learn it [...] it's my ancestors' language after all, and it seemed

very important to me to give my children what came from their roots and that they are aware of their roots, because, I think, that is our strength' (L39). But the limited role of Livonian in daily conversation and its occurrence primarily in performance for audiences causes some to worry that 'Livonianness can't become something that we only show on a stage' (LKT314); although some are pragmatic: 'I'm not harbouring any illusions that the language is going to return and that things will change. If the language can't be heard anywhere, then it can be held onto in songs' (LKT: 150). For one language teacher and singer the performative remains authentic: singing in Livonian 'is real language use and I work with it all the time [when] I explain the lyrics' (L26). In this reversal of priority and proficiency – with ICH containing language rather than vice versa – is also the risk that linguistic accuracy becomes secondary, where in song 'the pronunciation of the Livonian language is often wrong', and so 'the musical heritage, which is a strong carrier of language, is also a destroyer of language, because there are more bad examples than good ones' (L3). Even when there is not 'pushback', unfamiliar language can make (otherwise accessible) ICH more difficult, as 'every text has to be translated, analysed and learned in a strange tongue', so practising ICH requires additional measures and 'one has to make an [additional] effort' (L1).

Another challenge is maintaining an ecosystem for ICH to thrive. The Livonian Festival has, as described above, been vital in creating a vibrant Livonian community of practice. But there are also risks in this close association: one Livonian stakeholder felt that, perhaps ironically, the ability to move away from established practices is an important avenue for engagement by non-Livonians, and wondered about the cultural ecosystem's health broadly: 'Okay, you do a Livonian Festival once a year in Mazirbe, it's really cool, half of Latvia comes, something's happening. But, well, really, what do you do the rest of the time?' (L57). And yet, it is down to individuals to make events happen: as a Livonian musician found, 'If there are three do-ers, then they start to get tired at some point. And if you don't have that motivation to get more do-ers, you run out of resources very quickly' (L2). In this context, newcomers can be vital 'do-ers' since 'people leave, as much as new people come in who are ready to act and to take on public responsibility' (L59). This can risk outsider discourses impinging (consciously or otherwise) on the ICH. One local spoke of the carrot pie festival where 'there's no *carrot pie!* [...] really it's just a town festival', pointing to a European-level outsider discourse as detracting from the ICH itself: 'The application says 'First European Union food, traditional product [namely – carrot pie] listed in the scheme' [...] but there's nothing about the carrot pie' (L24). One Livonian stakeholder related the challenge with language courses where 'I know people who have started five times and never finished' – pointing instead to how 'in reality it happens naturally, on the ground level, on earth with the songs, with the carrot pies, with the homesteads' (L57). The challenge for the longevity of the language is to maintain momentum, which depends on several factors, such as motivation, proficiency in the language, personal relations, and preferences of ICH organisers, and the broader language ecosystem. Safeguarding and transmission of language, then, may rely on the younger generation but also perhaps on

newcomers; and on language transmission but also on ICH – and so considering the ecosystem as a whole can be a key arena to create the conditions needed for the culture to flourish.

The Livonian case is an example of an endangered culture in extreme conditions. These have affected and altered the inheritance process of Livonian language and ICH, as well as changed the positioning of the language within the ecosystem of Livonian ICH and those who practise it. On one hand, Livonian represents the paradox so common to endangered linguistic communities, where speakers feel a strong identification with the language but do not pass it on to their children (Sallabank 2010). Once a language stops being a natural part of everyday life, is no longer transmitted between generations within families, and is used less frequently, there often results a loss of ICH domains and reduced language proficiency; but the role of the language becomes more focused, its symbolic value strengthens, and it becomes central to the ICH and creative ecosystem (Stavans & Hoffmann 2015: 72). And so on the other hand, for Livonians, language is not only a passive actor in the strong connection and interplay of identity, ICH, and creativity, it also serves as an active trigger to motivate their preservation. Transmission, then, *is* happening: but it is taking place outside families and instead is being passed through different creative platforms such as singing groups, events and gatherings, and poetry. As the symbolic value of language is gradually increasing in turn, it becomes a binding element, a central string containing manifestations of one's identity as well as cultural and creative expressions: ICH and language are mutually enforcing. Crucial here is the change in focus from language being a vehicle for the intellectual productions and cultural manifestations of its speakers, to the cultural manifestations and ICH instead becoming a vehicle for language preservation, maintenance, or revitalisation.

This process can be likened to the geographical phenomenon of *upwelling*: a sudden process caused by winds and currents in which deep, cold water is brought to the surface of the ocean, letting warm surface water sink. Upwelling supports biodiversity and generates some of the world's most fertile ecosystems (National Geographic 2023). In the context of critically endangered linguistic and cultural communities, the metaphor of upwelling would describe an exchange of the roles of language (deep cold water) and ICH (warm surface water), when in certain conditions focus within the language–ICH ecosystem is switched, boosting creativity and practising of the ICH and serving the development and sustainability of both parts of this ecosystem. Language upwelling may also explain the paradox of the Livonian case, where despite the small size of the speaker community a disproportionately active, periodically intensifying cultural process has been observed over the past 150 years, with the language serving as the main purpose for practising ICH and creating new cultural products and platforms, despite the clear absence of a functional need for using it. Language itself has become the central element of this defence, building protective layers around itself using every available resource within ICH, creativity, symbolic values, and narratives across older and younger generations, the Livonian community, locals and incomers, those with Livonian heritage and those without.

## Notes

- 1 See Latvia's Law on Free Development and Rights for the Cultural Autonomy of Latvia's National and Ethnic Groups (1991) § 4, Official Language Law (1999) § 4, and Law of Historical Latvian Lands (2021) preamble and §4 (7).
- 2 In this chapter, we refer to these people as 'the Livonian community', by which we mean ethnic Livonians (i.e. descendants of Livonians mentioned in the list of Livonians compiled by Edgar Vālgamā in 1935–1937) who identify as such; that is, who have indicated their identity in official paperwork, who state it on their census return, and/or who otherwise actively acknowledge it.

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## 6 ‘You get an upgrade in Frisian’

### Processes of identity formation and negotiation around Frisian theatre

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In Frisia, the tradition of making theatre in Frisian has been passed on through generations of villagers, often within certain families, since 1860 (Oldenhof 2006). Entire village communities may participate in the staging of a play, and the intended audience can vary, from mostly fellow villagers to a broad public from within and outside the province. In all cases, theatre-making is a shared community practice, providing participants, volunteers, audience members, and other stakeholders with a cultural event that creates a sense of togetherness, and offers the possibility to exchange and communicate personal experiences and world views (Van Maanen 2009; Zijlstra 2020). Furthermore, since the number of people who can read or write Frisian is low (relative to the high numbers that speak it), Frisian spoken theatre, both amateur and professional, due to its informal and oral nature, makes it an easy means for Frisians to engage with ‘their’ language and culture (Provincie Fryslân 2020; Riemersma 2023).

In this chapter, we assess how Frisian theatre is embedded within, shaped by, and also challenges relations between minority and majority groups and individuals. We discuss this for four case studies, which among them represent three different types of Frisian theatre. Guiding this discussion is the question: how do processes of identity formation and negotiation, both on the level of the individual, and of the community, take place during Frisian theatre events, both amateur and professional? As has been argued (Gittell & Vidal 1998; Putnam 2000), participating in theatrical events can contribute both to ‘bonding’ among members of an in-group, and to ‘bridging’, i.e. the creation of new ties, with unfamiliar or unknown group-members. While the former may lead to the confirmation or strengthening of one’s original group identity, the latter can result in the negotiation of a new group identity, as the encounter with ‘others’ may challenge existing group boundaries. As such, the event might become a ‘third space’, where existing dominant cultural representations are contested (Marotta 2020; Bhabha 1994). Indeed, as we will show, the theatrical events that form our case studies in this chapter instigate processes of identity formation that are shaped by a social dynamic through which positions of insiders and outsiders are established, by both Frisian-speaking and Dutch-speaking participants in the events. These may lead to a sense of either belonging or alienation within the communities within which the events are embedded. This, in turn, influences the perception people may have of the value and

purpose of these events, and for whom they are intended. Our discussion is based on interviews with participants in these events, who may identify either as insider, or as outsider, or as some hybrid of these two positions. We shed light on their perspectives, their (implicit) attitudes, and boundaries that they assume are in place that regulate participation in these events. Our aim is to tease out how, as people feel encouraged, or, instead, prohibited to participate, (new) ways of identifying oneself are opened up, that may or may not offer more nuanced, or fluid ways of 'belonging' to the Frisian community.

### **Theatrical events in Frisia**

The performances we analyse here are, like all intangible cultural heritage (ICH), characterised by a strong communal aspect: as recurring theatrical events, they exist because, every season, a community of practice reproduces them, thereby maintaining the transfer of knowledge and skills between older and younger community members (Lave & Wenger 1998). At the same time, as works of art, these events need to have a certain newness. We therefore conceptualise this ICH as a social and cultural practice, and assess both the collective and personal engagement such a practice enables. Doing so allows us to explore the way in which insider and outsider identities are shaped and demarcated within the power dynamics that come with this, and that produce social processes of inclusion and exclusion that imply certain rules of engagement (see Hodsdon, Ozalina and Zijlstra, elsewhere in this volume). These theatrical events, as well as their preparations, create spaces for meaning-making that are both shaped by, and offer room for, the negotiation of these power dynamics. Before we give our analysis, we first discuss what we mean by theatrical events in Frisia, how we conceptualise Frisian theatre as ICH, and what we see as theatre's affordances when it comes to the negotiation of identities.

When we speak, in this chapter, of Frisian theatre, we mean theatre that is mainly performed in the Frisian language. Within Frisian theatre, roughly three types can be discerned. Firstly, there is village amateur theatre, which is made locally, and targeted at local audiences. Then, there are semi-professional so-called *iepenloftspullen*, a Frisian term that translates to 'open air plays'. These are made and performed locally, but often target a broader audience. Finally, there is professional theatre, in this case made by Tryater, a theatre company describing itself as multi-lingual, based in Frisia's capital Leeuwarden. Tryater was established in 1965 and is part of the Netherlands' national theatre infrastructure. Although Tryater's productions are primarily meant for an audience from Frisia, the company tours some of its productions outside of the province, and regularly attracts an audience from beyond Frisia. Different though these types may be, what they have in common is that they are primarily organised for Frisian communities and regional audiences, and tend to involve the inhabitants of the villages where the performance takes place (Zijlstra et al. 2016). We study them as 'theatrical events', i.e. cultural events which take place during a specific time, on a specific location, and under specific circumstances, and that bring together different participants, such as theatre makers, audiences, and other stakeholders (Sauter 2000). The theatrical event is rooted

in human presence and interaction and comprises not only the performance itself, but also social and communal activities surrounding it. Therefore, we study these performances as part of a set of social and cultural conventions and circumstances that determine the specific characteristics of the performance, the cultural practice it is part of, and the way it is ‘knitted into the social fabric of the day’ (Knowles 2004: 100–101). This allows us to study how the dynamics that come with minoritisation shape the ways in which Frisian theatre, as a specific event, as a communal practice, and as ICH, is valued by different participants and stakeholders.

The analysis is based on data gathered during and around four Frisian theatre events. *It Gelok fan Fryslân (Frisia’s Happiness)*, by Tryater, was a series of performances in villages around Frisia that explored the seemingly paradoxical fact that Frisians, according to a recent national survey, are the happiest people in the Netherlands, despite living in a relatively poor part of the country. *It Deiboek fan Anne Frank*, an adaptation in Frisian of the English play, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, took place in a community centre in Toppenhuzen en Twellingea, a village of 1600 inhabitants. *Under Wetter (Under Water)* by Tryater was performed in the village of Wergea. *De Jacht (The Hunt)*, was the 2022 edition of one of Frisia’s most well-known iepenloftspullen, an annual event staged by Stifting Iepenloft Jorwert (Open Air Jorwert Foundation), performed in Jorwert. All these events exemplify how Frisian theatre performances are often strongly embedded within local communities, albeit in different ways. Tryater is not linked to a particular village but, in the case of *Under Wetter*, involved amateur actors and local volunteers in this site-specific outdoor production, and collaborated with local businesses. The amateur theatre organisation that put on *It deiboek fan Anne Frank* has as its motto ‘For the village and with the village’ and one of its main concerns is to keep the younger generation of the village involved. In Jorwert, finally, the foundation that stages the iepenloftspul has professional employees, but also relies on a very well-managed volunteer base of over an hundred individuals from in and around the village. We made observations at the performances and during preparations, and conducted interviews in Frisian and Dutch with makers, participants, volunteers, audience members, and, in extension, policy makers and other stakeholders, ensuring a diversity among respondents with regard to native language (Frisian, Dutch, or other), region or village of origin, and role in the production (see Appendix 2 for dataset).

## Analysis

We first discuss how respondents consider these theatrical events as uniquely *Frisian* ICH, and how language plays an important role in this. We then discuss the function that these events fulfil within their communities, and how respondents consider Frisian theatre – both as a tradition, and as individual events – to be a space for building and strengthening a Frisian identity. We further discuss how participation contributes to community building, and how both insiders and outsiders navigate the dynamics that come with the encounter between minority and majority perspectives. Finally, we address how respondents perceive these perspectives, both within the social contexts of our case studies and their daily lives.

*Frisian theatre is theatre in Frisian*

To start with, the extent to which our respondents conceive of Frisian theatrical events as something typically *Frisian*, or, for that matter, as *heritage*, is a complicated issue. In general, respondents see the practice first and foremost as theatre: an art practice in which they participate as either amateurs or professionals, not as something that is an intrinsic part of (or of which an intrinsic part is) the local, Frisian, heritage. Thus, when respondents are asked to think of something typically Frisian, they will at first not mention the theatrical event, but rather things like the 'language, the sports' (F88). The latter, in particular, such as *keatsen* (*Frisian handball*, e.g. F88; F64) and *skûtsjesilen* (*barge sailing*, e.g. F48; F23) is frequently named as an example of Frisian heritage. When pressed, however, respondents do start to acknowledge that Frisian theatre has a unique place in local culture. They may do so for two reasons.

Firstly, there is a sense for some that in Frisia 'the DNA of the amateur art runs very deep' (F111), as a Dutch cultural consultant phrases it. The iepenloftspullen especially are often considered as something very Frisian. A young actor says about this that 'groups that perform something in the open in Frisian at the same time of year, that's a typical thing' (F113). At least in the mind of some respondents, these theatrical events can therefore be said to form a uniquely Frisian 'tradition' (F107). Secondly, and much more pronounced, when people consider these theatrical events 'a *Frisian* performance' (F41, emphasis added), they do so because they are in the Frisian language. This also makes it of significant cultural value, in the mind of many respondents. As a villager from Top en Twel, visiting the performance in that village, puts it, 'I think [Frisian theatre] is [...] valuable. You have to conserve your culture [...]. We're Frisian here. And it's nice that that stays. We all speak Frisian'. Even though she stresses she is 'not afraid that Frisian will disappear', she does feel that with a performance like *It Deiboek fan Anne Frank*, Frisian 'gets attention' and that it is therefore 'nice [...] that it's put on in Frisian, that's a good thing. [...] It's nice that it's passed on' (F29). An actor in *De Jacht* concurs, saying, 'I think telling a story in a certain language shows to the people watching: this language exists, look into it, or something [...]. That makes the story feel closer. To people like deep-Frisians, that's very important' (F113). Interesting to note, here, is the oscillation between advocacy on the one hand, stressing how important it is that people feel validated in their Frisian identity, and on the other a certain critical distance, in the term 'deep-Frisians' ('Diepfriezen'), commonly used to denote Frisians, often nationalists, who feel strongly about the need to conserve Frisian language and culture. The term always implies a certain irony, and can be used to either mildly mock (as seems to be the case here), or strongly criticise, a strong focus on Frisianness.

What needs to be considered here – although it is never made explicit by our respondents – is that these theatrical events facilitate a rare moment where the use of Frisian is unquestioned and considered the default – while normally, in public, it always has to give way to Dutch, despite the fact that the province is officially bilingual (Günther-van der Meij 2018). This, for instance, seems to be the reason

that a volunteer involved in organising the open air play in Jorwert argues for keeping Frisian as the language of the play, despite the fact that non-speakers of Frisian come and visit: ‘Well, Frisian is only put forward in Frisia in the open air theatre. So then you should maintain that’ (F96). As we discuss in the next subsection, there is some awareness that this may deter non-Frisians from joining, but this visitor is not too worried about that, when she says, ‘There’s enough people who don’t speak Frisian but do want to see and hear Frisian plays’ (F96). A Dutch visitor to the play – proving her point by his mere presence – also considers that even if this does keep some people away, ‘it’s fine that it is for Frisians, if they enjoy it. What more do you want?’ (F113). Again, although not explicitly put, there is an implication here that there are enough cultural events available in Dutch, and it is important to keep at least some traditions where Frisian remains dominant, as a kind of ‘safe space’, so to speak, where Frisians may perform their identity and speak their language without expectation or anticipation of having to negotiate away from it.

Furthermore, theatre makers see using Frisian as affording creative possibilities. Thus, for a manager of Tryater (F78), ‘it’s an artistic thing, that I appreciate how language is used here and the richness it has’. Interestingly enough, being Dutch himself, he stresses that this element is missing in Dutch theatre. There, precisely because Dutch is not a minority language, ‘It’s evident that you work in Dutch, while Tryater always makes a conscious decision about speaking Frisian, how to speak Frisian, how they work. I think that’s beautiful for a theatre company’. Another respondent (F37), a theatre reviewer, combines this increased artistic value of using Frisian with the fact that Frisians experience a greater sense of belonging at these events and feel more connected to their Frisian identity. On the one hand, according to him, ‘people can say, Frisian matters. It might touch the authentic villagers, those that are still there. They can say: it’s mine, my language. [...] It [...] sounds nice in the language I’ve learnt’. On the other hand, this also has an artistic effect: ‘Then [the play] has an extra value. You get an upgrade in Frisian’. Interestingly, he is speaking about *It Deiboek fan Anne Frank*, which is originally an American play about a world-famous Dutch book that has no direct ties to Frisia – the implication being that for this particular audience, its poignant message probably comes across better *because* it is performed in Frisian. This is corroborated by a visitor to that play, who says, ‘the Frisian makes it a bit closer to home, very believable’ (F28). This notion, that because Frisian has a certain emotional value for participants, and therefore may increase the artistic value of the theatrical events, returns in several interviews. An actor claims, for instance, that when he has ‘to speak in Dutch in scenes, it feels less real. You feel like you’re acting more’ (F72). Again, this is recognised by audience members. Another visitor to *It Deiboek fan Anne Frank* notes about one of the actors, ‘When she got angry [...], she couldn’t do that in Dutch, I think. You can’t convey such emotion in the same way’ (F33). This is especially striking since, nowadays, almost all speakers of Frisian are fully bilingual (Günther-van der Meij 2018), so the feeling that there are things one could do in Frisian, but not in Dutch, is not a given – although it will be shared by many native speakers (cf. Coret-Bergstra et al. 2021).

### ***Community boundaries***

As we saw in the previous section, an important value of these theatrical events is that they facilitate the social gathering for those for whom the Frisian language is important. In this section, we discuss how the events also contribute to a sense of community within the villages, not only because of a shared language, but by providing the villages with a shared tradition, which can be a source of pride, and around which a community of practice can come into existence. After all, the event itself does not just happen: a long production process that intricately ties it to the local community precedes it, involving a host of people organising and participating – especially in the case of the amateur and the semi-professional productions. The events are embedded within, and facilitate larger social processes in, the villages, and whenever that is made explicit the connection of the theatrical event to the community becomes most pronounced, as well as the social dynamics through which minority and majority cultures and identities are demarcated.

In Jorwert, for instance, the iepenloftspul has had long-standing appeal, not only locally but also to the whole province and beyond, which is somewhat at odds with the fact that the village has around just 300 inhabitants. However, as one of the theatre makers sees it, this may not be so surprising after all: 'I think the cooperation with all of the people, that a village is good at that, that you do things together' (F102). Indeed, many of the villagers are involved in some way or another in organising the open air play. Noteworthy, in this respect, is that this particular event is larger than the community can produce and semi-professional, and therefore does not only involve local volunteers. This brings with it the risk that the organisation loses touch with its local base, or starts to prioritise other values (such as artistic or commercial ones) over the value it has as a facilitator of community building (see Semley & Hodsdon, this volume, for discussion of event stakeholders). There was a time, the same respondent remembers, when this had happened: 'there was no bond at all, and it got worse and worse'. The play was becoming a source of annoyance for villagers:

...complaints about the noise, but also disturbance in general [...]. It's a village of 350 people, and then 800 people a night came to visit. And rehearsals, too, groups of 50, and they always parked their cars wherever. From May onwards.

(F102)

He concludes that the 'only reason' that the villagers 'allowed' the play to take place was that the local pub took care of the catering for the theatre makers and visitors. The revenue this generated kept the pub open all year, so that villagers 'still had a place for the village community to use and come together'. Things only changed when agency was returned to the villagers: 'So we went back to the core of things and were like "how do we get it back to Jorwert?". The organisation became more aware of the necessity to balance artistic value and the value the play has for the village, and 'started talking with the village about "what can we do to meet you?" without losing artistic ambition' (F102). The need for this is now clearly felt among the professional theatre makers, another one of whom realises that

if the Jorwerters all together don't like it anymore [...] we are stuck and we would have to find another village with a similar space and I don't think that would be easy. You always have to be able to get along with the village.

(F104)

The efforts to connect with villagers and to make sure the play contributes positively to the community's sustainability have led to a firm connection with the local community, the members of which now strongly identify as coming from the place where this well-known, eponymous event takes place.

Tryater, which, as a professional organisation that operates on a broader scope, does not have a direct connection with one specific village or community, recognises the importance of such relations with local communities for Frisian theatre. *It Gelok fan Fryslân* and *Under Wetter*, both staged by Tryater, were performed on location, and we observed how the makers reached out to and collaborated with the local community and local businesses. However, since their relationship with local communities is project-based, Tryater's communities are temporal, based around a single experience, rather than a recurring event, and as such, will mostly dissolve once the performance has ended. In the case of the amateur and semi-professional events, the effects of the event and its organisation live on well past the performance dates, since a lively community of practice has come into existence around them. The organisation and execution of these events not only facilitates social processes: they may provide, as we saw in the case of Jorwert and Top en Twel, a strong and lasting sense of pride, and contribute to a shared sense of identity, thereby contributing to the sustainability of the village community.

It must be noted, at this point, that such a community of practice may exclude individuals, as well as it includes others (see Moenandar, Moran-Nae & Hodsdon, elsewhere in this volume). We already saw in the previous section that respondents were aware of the fact that the use of Frisian may be exclusionary. As a Dutch visitor to *It Deiboek fan Anne Frank* puts it, 'it excludes people that don't understand Frisian of course. Yeah, that can be a barrier' (F45). At the same time, it clearly was *not* a barrier for this particular visitor, and we see, among the Dutch respondents we spoke to, an understanding of why it is important to maintain the use of Frisian at these events (although, of course, since these are Dutch people who consciously chose to participate in a theatrical event where Frisian is the main language, a certain tolerance, and maybe even enthusiasm, for Frisian can be expected). Another Dutch respondent, who moved to Top en Twel and is involved in the organisation of the event, claims that her willingness to learn Frisian was a way into the community. She feels strongly about the need to keep it part of the ICH: 'I feel so at home and I know so many people here and I just know that here in the community centre – and it's the theatre association – Frisian is spoken. *That's part of this*' (F30, emphasis ours). In other words, Frisian is, indeed, seen as a boundary, but this is not considered as something negative.

We see a similar attitude among the Frisian respondents. They acknowledge that non-Frisian speakers may feel excluded by the use of Frisian in the community and the theatrical event. As a visitor of *De Jacht* puts it, when observing that most

audience members are Frisian, 'I get that. It's in Frisian – if you go to a play you don't understand, that's not very fun' (F107). This is the price to pay, it seems, for using a language that strengthens the sense of community and a shared identity. One Frisian visitor to *Under Wetter* even suggests that there may be an added value, also for Dutch people, to visit a Frisian theatrical event: 'I think people that are not Frisian might find it interesting to hear something Frisian. So in that way they would get into contact with that. I think that would have an added value' (F74). Note, here, the notion that being interested in Frisian may bring someone closer to the community, which we also saw expressed earlier by the Dutch respondent living in Top en Twel. At the same time, there is a willingness among Frisians to find solutions. One respondent, for instance, thought using subtitles could result in 'people that are Dutch also [going] there' (F105), while a visitor to *Under Wetter* was enthusiastic about the fact that 'you could even get Google glasses [for subtitles]. I do think it is a good thing that they offer those things' (F104). Thus, creating a language barrier is clearly not the aim of using the Frisian language, and if it can be overcome, that is seen as a good thing.

Beyond subtitles or other forms of translation, there is the possibility of full multilingualism on stage, with actors speaking other languages than Frisian (Dutch, English) embraced by Tryater, which promotes itself as a *multilingual* theatre company. One company member was very outspoken in this:

I think that idea of multilingualism [...] is being embraced more and people are starting to see it as a Frisian reality. And that Frisian isn't about leaning on some kind of solely-conservation-oriented way – that you have to open up in order to maintain your right to exist.

(F102)

What we see in this challenge to the notion that Frisian theatre should be solely in Frisian is a combination of negotiating a new ideal for Frisian ICH: the implication being that, since the province is fundamentally multilingual, its ICH should also be; and a certain pragmatism: given the cultural reality, it is unsustainable, this respondent seems to argue, to have theatre in Frisian only. Another example of this is the observation, by a cultural consultant involved with strengthening the infrastructure for amateur art in the province (F111), that if the community of practice around theatrical events revolves around a 'very Frisian core', as he calls it, then 'if you don't speak Frisian', it may be 'very difficult to feel connected [...] and to get into things. It might be a bit alienating'. When this happens, the community of practice, which plays such a central role in village life, may become an obstacle for 'integration in villages'. Again, and as observed throughout this book, we see here how any community will come with its own boundaries. Since there is an increase in non-Frisians moving to villages around Frisia, including the places where our case studies took place, this may also threaten the sustainability of the events. Newcomers and non-speakers of Frisian make up an ever-larger percentage of the inhabitants, and if they do not feel they could be part of a community of insiders organising these events, the participation and attendance of inhabitants may stagnate or decline.

In this regard, the non-participation of those who are more naturally considered insiders is seen as equally – if not more – problematic. The difficulty of recruiting and involving young people especially is mentioned by many respondents. One father is happy his son participates in the open air play in Jorwert, but observes that, in general, ‘where do young people go, right? To the movies. That’s for young people, not here [i.e. the location of the iepenloftspul]’ (F80). A young actor in the performance itself (F113) stresses the need to ensure young people remain involved, exclaiming, ‘Frisian theatre. Keep making it. Promote it. Get young people involved. Throw in or offer performances. So the younger generation can get involved. And just make it. Make fun things, weird things. Just go’. Despite his enthusiasm, however, he also observes that ‘there weren’t really a lot of young people’ at the play. In the case of Jorwert, the involvement of young people is of importance for the sustainability of the community and village life, and the young actor notices with some relief that ‘the young people from Jorwert did come’. Beyond that, we also see a broader concern with theatre – both Frisian and in general. A visitor to Tryater’s *Under Wetter*, for instance, expresses the opinion that the play should go to ‘festivals where the young people are’ because he thinks ‘it’s important it’s passed on’ (F59). Thus, it seems that for many of our respondents who value the contribution to the vitality of village communities of Frisian theatre, a pressing challenge is to keep this ICH interesting for youngsters and newcomers in order to continue its transmission (see also Ernštreits et al., this volume). In this thinking about the sustainability of these events, there seems to be an interesting tension between principles and pragmatics. This tension almost never becomes very pronounced, but seems to underlie the respondents’ reasoning. People may think that, in principle, it is good to maintain Frisian in these theatrical events, because it is an intrinsic part of the tradition; while pragmatically its continued use may exclude potential participants and therefore may threaten the sustainability of the tradition. Conversely, people may think that, in principle, these theatrical events should be inclusive, and therefore should use languages that can be understood by larger groups of people than just Frisians; while pragmatically they may feel that it is the language that keeps the tradition alive, and therefore sustainable. Of course, any combination of these attitudes is possible, and they almost never seem to be very strongly felt. In any case, the use of Frisian is constantly a subject of more or less mild valuation and negotiation by the respondents. This comes, of course, with its minority status – a dominant language is a given, while the position of a minoritised one constantly needs to be re-evaluated.

***Identity negotiation: speaking Frisian is being Frisian***

As we have said, the ICH, both as a single event, and as something at the centre of a community of practice, is embedded within, and facilitates larger social processes in, the villages. The performance and its organisation instigate sense-making and negotiation of values and meaning that go beyond the performance itself, especially when it comes to the identities of the people involved. Thus, we find that in our interviews, respondents are quick to respond to questions about their identity. They appear to claim or reject identities with ease, or negotiate the way they identify

themselves to others on the fly, setting up boundaries as easily as they cross them. For instance, when a visitor to *It Gelok fan Fryslân* is asked whether she identifies as Frisian, she starts waxing philosophical and says, 'I don't feel Dutch. [...] I'd rather be a world citizen. So either Frisian or world citizen', then stresses the situatedness of her identity: 'when you're in Europe, you're Dutch; when you're in the Netherlands, you're Frisian; when you're in Hijum [small Frisian village], you're from that street' (F2). Throughout our research, we continuously observed similar identity claims and identity negotiations. A Frisian theatre maker involved in *It Deiboek fan Anne Frank*, who lived for a long time in Amsterdam, ruminated, for instance, how 'I always felt Frisian, but I did go along with all that in Amsterdam. So – I'm someone who switches to Dutch very easily and people can't usually tell that I'm Frisian' (F39). What makes this remark especially poignant is that Amsterdam is generally seen as the cultural centre of the Netherlands – and Frisia as the periphery.

For people who do not originally come from Frisia, or have their roots there, there always seems to be some hesitation to consider themselves Frisian, despite in some cases having lived in the province for a considerable amount of time. Consider, in this respect, the following dialogue between a couple who have lived for decades in Kollum, where *It Gelok fan Fryslân* was being performed. The husband hesitates when asked what he identifies as, saying 'I feel very, well [laughs] just...' His wife then finishes his sentence for him, proposing 'Dutch', but he rejects this: 'A lot broader. Much broader than just Frisian. Even though I've lived in Frisia for the longest amount of time'. He goes on to say, 'but I also feel a little bit, a little bit like a Drent. And a Groninger!' (Drenthe and Groningen are two provinces bordering on Frisia and are generally considered to be equally rural and peripheral). His wife considers this and adds, 'I don't have that, but I do feel Gronings'. He then adds another bit of identity: 'And because I've lived in Amsterdam, also a little bit Amsterdammer'. His most decisive identity claim, however, is 'Gronings, yeah. After all. Even though I've lived in [Frisia] longer than I've lived in the village I was born in' (F9, F10). Identity seems, thus, to be first and foremost where you come from. You pick up facets along the way, as you live your life in different places. In any case, as the laughter shows, it is not a highly urgent question for them. Finally note, too, how 'broader' in this case does not mean European or world citizen, as with the respondent cited earlier, but rather, a mosaic of more local identities.

One reason for the hesitancy to claim a Frisian identity may be that it is so strongly tied to the language. We see this when people say, for instance, that they feel Frisian because 'all my grandparents and aunts and uncles and *everyone speaks Frisian*' (F46, emphasis added). Thus, losing the language may also result in losing your Frisian identity, as is implied when a father says about his son,

he lives in Amsterdam now, he still speaks Frisian very well. He speaks Dutch with his girlfriend who is from Rotterdam, and with his boy as well. You don't hear he's from Frisia. But as soon as he's here, he speaks Frisian with the boys he grew up with.

(F37)

One gets the feeling that should this son no longer be able to switch to speaking Frisian very well like that, his claim to a Frisian identity would also be lost. This is the case not only on an individual level but also on the level of the entire community of Frisians. As another respondent (F47) says: ‘the Frisian identity, I would like to keep that up’. As he sees it, the main threat for this identity is the possible demise of the language. He worries, therefore, about school: ‘in the hallways, [the kids] are speaking Dutch to each other, and none of the kids are speaking Frisian, I do fear that’. He also observes that his village, Top en Twel, ‘fifty years ago [...] was still an entirely Frisian village, but it has changed to a more mixed village’. Several respondents report the same sense of Dutch as a threat. A couple visiting *It Deiboek fan Anne Frank*, for instance, discusses how, as the wife puts it, Even if you’re both Frisian [...] it’s a challenge to teach [kids] Frisian’, since ‘a lot of social media is in Dutch [...] all Dutch videos, so they hear everything in Dutch’. The husband adds, ‘It’s a cultural assumption with the kids’ (F15)’. For another respondent, this may have consequences beyond the language disappearing. When asked what he sees as the biggest challenge to Frisian theatre, he responds, ‘that Frisian disappears. The Dutchification of Frisia. [...] *Import*’ (F15, our emphasis). That last word is a common term in the Netherlands to refer to people in a village who come from outside that village – who are thus, here, as speakers of the dominant language, also the bearers of a ‘Dutchification’, threatening the identity that holds the village and its theatrical tradition together. This seems the logical consequence of the fact that, as we saw, this tradition is considered Frisian because of the fact it is in Frisian.

This may explain why Dutch people who moved to these villages tend to hesitate to see themselves as insiders. An inhabitant of Jorwert, who identifies as Dutch but, significantly, has lived in Frisia all her life, puts it very explicitly when she says, ‘in the village, if you don’t speak Frisian, you remain a bit of an outsider, even though I’ve lived there for 25 years’ (F106). It is telling, in this respect, that the Dutch volunteer we cited above, who saw herself as an insider, did so in particular because she learned the language. This is somewhat at odds with the general tendency, as we saw, among respondents to treat the negotiation of their identity within the Dutch-Frisian majority–minority dynamics, not as picking sides, with one choice excluding the other, but fluidly shifting along all kinds of nuances and hybridity. In the end, it seems, identities, as well as theatre performances, need one defining element to be considered *truly* (rather than somewhat) Frisian: the language.

## Conclusion

So, how are communal and individual identities formed and negotiated during the Frisian theatre events studied here? Our analysis shows that respondents are very aware of the relativity of their identity claims, and emphasise either their minority or majority identity, depending on the context. Most identity claims we encountered were hybrid, in line with the multilingualism and multiculturalism of contemporary Frisia. However, Frisian-speaking respondents clearly identify as Frisian when considering participating, while this was also when non-Frisian speakers

most clearly felt they were outsiders. Particularly in the case of the amateur and semi-professional theatre performances, the event and its social context are experienced first and foremost as Frisian: including those that speak and understand Frisian, excluding those who don't. It is at this point that respondents consider these theatrical events to be Frisian and see them as part of the Frisian cultural landscape and, additionally, as part of the social dynamics of village life. While there is theatre and amateur theatre everywhere, it is especially the language, and – to a lesser extent – the local tradition of *iepenloftspullen*, with its scope and vibrancy, that makes theatre practice in the province something uniquely Frisian.

Given the central role of language, the willingness and capacity to at least understand Frisian is the most significant boundary dividing outsiders from (potential) insiders. Whether or not understanding or speaking the language will make one Frisian, despite not having parents and grandparents for whom this was also true, remains to be seen, but both insiders and outsiders seem to agree that it is on this condition that access to the community of practice will be granted. There is a certain sense of pride among respondents who managed this, and a payoff as well, as it comes with a way to personally connect to the Frisian-speaking community, and with that, a sense of belonging. As such they can be seen as 'experts' in how to integrate successfully in a village community, combining aspects of majority and minority identity.

We found that in their thinking about the consequences of the stress on language, respondents oscillated between, on the one hand, a strong sense that things should remain this way; and, on the other hand, a willingness to open up the tradition to outsiders. Frisian theatre is seen as a place where Frisian, unlike in other spaces, is the dominant language. This seems, at least for some respondents — both Frisian and Dutch — to be one of its main values. At the same time, this also creates a language barrier that may need to be somehow overcome to make the practice more sustainable in terms of generating revenue and increasing the amount of people who could be involved. On the side of the theatre associations, we find they use clearly different language strategies: the village amateur theatre group always performs in Frisian and usually chooses more traditional plays, which requires a higher level of language proficiency to participate; the open-air theatre group always performs in Frisian, but appeals to broader audiences by staging adaptations of international movies; the professional theatre company puts in a lot of effort to open up the performances for non-Frisian speakers by involving Dutch and international theatre makers and/or through accessibility measures, like subtitling, smart glasses and a multilingual marketing approach.

Although Frisian theatre is a unique tradition that was shaped by specific local circumstances, the different functions that it may fulfil could be exemplary for the role that theatre – and the performing arts in general, both amateur and professional – can fulfil in the mediation and maintenance of minority ICH. As we have seen, these possible functions are: creating 'safe spaces' for strengthening the minority language and (communal) identity building (as social cultural practices); opening up the ICH to outsider perspectives and strengthening the minority language and culture through its communalities; or actively integrating the changing cultural and linguistic landscape, as in the multilingual approach taken by Tryater, which reflects the contemporary

linguistic reality of much of Frisia. The challenges faced by Frisian theatre, as reported by our respondents, will also be recognised in other minority contexts: the importance of passing on such artistic traditions that are strongly entwined with the minority language and culture to younger generations, and of engaging newcomers to ensure the continued embedment of such cultural events in their local communities. Judging from the Frisian context, it is not enough to merely state how important it is to involve younger generations. Clear future strategies to ensure this involvement and keep the tradition sustainable are needed too. It would be helpful to more explicitly state – in policy documents and general communication – how events like this contribute to the sustainability of a minority culture. In our case studies, many respondents observed that Frisian theatre, both as singular events, and as a longstanding tradition, provides a stronghold for the Frisian language and culture. In this way, as we saw, theatrical events may offer opportunities for amplifying the voice of a minority. All those involved seem to agree that there is no Frisian (adjective) without Frisian (substantive, i.e. the language), and these theatrical events therefore have much to contribute to the continued existence of both. However, none of the associations that produced these performances explicitly mentioned this important function of their activities. Doing so could help safeguard the tradition as a socially embedded cultural practice that facilitates the informal transfer of a minority language and culture – a conclusion that may be instructive for other, similar minority contexts.

## Note

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# Spaces



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## 7 **What is the post-industrial rural for? Intangible cultural heritage, rural world-making, and core—periphery imaginaries**

*Joanie Willett*

In this chapter, I explore questions of rurality and peripherality in conjunction with insider/outsider relationships, how intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is performed, and the affective imaginary surrounding it. The starting point for this lies in the changing nature of the ‘rural’; what the ‘purpose’ of the rural is imagined to be; the tangled relationships between the people who live in a locality and the geologies, geographies, and ecologies on which a people have subsisted. These entanglements between people and the environments they are from encompass the world-makings that individuals and cultural groups build, together with their rich constellation of imaginaries, as well as the place-making and place-shaping that follows as cultures re-interpret their local environments through the lens of their cultural frameworks. In short, cultures emerge from what it took for a group of people to live in and on a landscape, in a time where people were much more dependent on, tied, and connected to the local environment. However, across the Western world the latter half of the 20th century in particular brought with it fundamental and crucial changes to the nature of the rural – although the process often began much earlier. Wendell Berry’s character of Jayber Crow encapsulates this shift. Crow grew up in an (American) rural when the small town was largely self-sufficient. The resident population grew what they could in the geologies and ecologies that they inhabited, rarely moving outside of town limits except to trade, go to war, and (if they were prosperous enough) to study. This was a time when, whether they recognised it or not, people in rural communities existed in a tangled, co-dependent, co-evolutionary relationship with each other and the natural environment they were from. They might not have been aware of it, but in their world-makings (see Schulterman et al. 2022) they were developing intangible cultures of stories, practices, traditions, knowledges, and languages that expressed how they navigated and existed in their lived environments. In developing and practising their world-making, which would solidify into what we here are terming intangible culture, the forbears of many of our interviewees were contributing to an ever-evolving affective assemblage (see Deleuze & Guattari 2004; Cool & Frost 2010; DeLanda 2011) of cultural meanings.

I describe this affective constellation around a region or place as an assemblage, because it is a loose collection of objects, institutions, practices, structures, infrastructures, knowledges, and meanings which are brought together through the

lived experiences of a contiguous group of people in a specific place. It is affective because encounters with these objects, institutions, practices, structures, infrastructures, knowledges, and meanings literally affect individuals and groups, creating new ideas and emotional responses which build on what went before in the recent or distant past. The ability of a physical or ideational thing to impact on another thing creates a connection or attachment between different components of the assemblage, which might solidify into something concrete, or it might dissipate over time. This is why the question ‘where are you from?’ is such an important and salient one. Place is not just the backdrop where meanings happen and are created, but the places where we are from are folded into the mental map of our worlds in intimate and intricate ways (Page 2020; Ingold 2011; Head 2016). Therefore, the question ‘where are you from?’ is actually asking ‘what world-making do you carry with you?’ and ‘what kinds of co-evolutionary knowledges and meanings are you situated within?’

Assemblages are comprised of many other assemblages, which might affect or shape the various different aspects of the region to a greater or lesser extent. Over the natural processes of regional evolution some assembled objects, beliefs, and meanings affect region-assemblages less and less, leaving only a trace of its affective impact in memories and histories. They may be replaced by other assemblages, which are more reflective of the wider, rapidly evolving, socio-economic environments within which they are situated. If, however, an assemblage is no longer able to affect other assembled objects, it will wither away and be lost to time, the past no longer remaining alive in the affective impact of memory.

To return to Jayber Crow. Crow finds himself at the point of time where the internal combustion engine revolutionises farm work, the amount of labour required, and thereby local economies. The car also collapses space, meaning that once-distant places are now reachable in a matter of minutes. For Crow, the affective impacts that he is used to in his assembled community are receding and dissipating at pace, being replaced by other processes, technologies, and practices. He witnesses the ways in which this lessens the importance and significance of the rural, as for reasons of rational efficiency things that were once done in the town are now undertaken much further away. If Crow was still alive just a few decades later he would also note the trickle, and later flood, of new people, enjoying rural ecologies and temporalities. In this way, the rural goes from being a place whereby the means of subsistence is produced, to a space whereby (rural) places, and all that happens within them, are consumed in the visitor economy (Willett 2016; Hilliard 2022).

Rural and peripheral places become ‘gentrified’ as leisure spaces, where wealthier persons from the city can ‘escape’ to the country for an anticipated higher quality of life as inward-migrants or as tourists. At times, this can mean families trying to avoid selling property that they have held for some time, in the face of (for rural areas) catastrophic economic change which precipitates many (particularly younger people) moving to the city. Leebrick (2015) uses autoethnographical research to show how the gentrification of rural spaces is also the story of very different world-makings, or cultures, inhabiting the same space, and the power relationships (and resistances) that develop from sometimes vastly unequal abilities

to shape one's own life. Leebrick's in-migrants have the choices and resources available to them to pursue their individual flourishing, whereas intergenerational locals are managing the dissipation of the constellation of assembled meanings, practices, and institutions on which their world-making is based. Over a period of several decades, vast disparities in social and economic capital (see Putnam 2000) mean that persons with intergenerational local heritage are effectively pushed out from contemporary place-making and place-shaping, while their tangible and intangible cultures become a backdrop to how place is performed, and an 'attraction' for the visitor market.

From one perspective, it could be said that the process that we witness is merely the nature of how global socio-economic evolution is manifest in rural areas. Mechanisation reduces the numbers of persons required to work in traditional industries, and much traditional production has moved overseas to places where labour is cheaper (Macy 2015; Willett 2021). This means that the (Western) rural has a very different function in the contemporary national and global economy than it has had over the rest of human history. From this perspective, the inward migration or 'gentrification' which affects rural areas throughout the West is just the way in which the rural remains relevant. The alternative is rural depopulation, which by definition would mean that even centuries-old rural cultures would cease. Bluntly put, such cultures would no longer have the ability to generate new affective relationships, sustain existing ones, and certainly not have impacts outside of the cultural group. Indeed, this is a definition of peripheral, which is not only about physical geographical distance between the periphery and the core region but also about the degree to which a periphery is able to have any kind of affective impact on the cultural world-makings of 'core' region-assemblages. However, as Leebrick (2015), Hines (2010), and Willett (2023) show, sometimes the difference between the meanings, attitudes, values, and beliefs of newer incomers' affective assemblages is vastly different to those embedded in autochthonous ICHs. In fact, their affective world-makings and place-shapings can be significantly different. Willett's (2023) approach is to explore the extent to which new in-migrants can learn (and learn how to be a part of and value) the intangible cultures of persons with intergenerational backgrounds in a place.

However, there is another mechanism that can challenge and problematise processes designed to ensure that these different communities are able to operate around the same assemblage of place – even if their affective association is coming from a very different set of world-makings and attempts at place-shaping. In the Western world it is often accompanied by constructions of knowledge that 'other' rural people. Consequently, persons who are intergenerationally embedded in rural cultures are often stereotyped as 'backwards', 'conservative', and 'traditional' as opposed to forward thinking, innovative, and progressive. At its extreme, the idea that innovation might happen in rural areas, by rural people, is too dissonant to be accepted freely, and it can have real consequences in a rural labour market where in-migrants can be perceived as 'smarter' and local people and institutions stigmatised (Willett 2021; Eriksson 2008; Bürk, Kühn & Sommer 2012). Nevertheless, these stereotypes are often pursued through varying types of mainstream

media, which construct imaginaries and symbolic repertoire around the fantasy rural through literature, television, tourist destination marketing, and cultural and economic policies (Eriksson 2008; Pfoser 2017). In other words, I am making the assumption in this chapter that some of the dominant knowledges and meanings surrounding contemporary rural region-assemblages are derived and developed by persons ‘other’ to those who are intergenerationally situated in ICH, or are created in order to attract a specific type of person to an amenity-based rural. To an extent, this is inevitable as assemblages (and indeed, life) are forever evolving (Deleuze & Guattari 2004; DeLanda 2011). However this raises questions about (unequal) power relationships driving ICH change, and introduces issues over authenticity. It also needs to be acknowledged that this is setting up a binary and dualism between the rural and the urban, the periphery and the centre which, although well-defined in the scholarship, is much more blurry and complex in real life.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will consider ICH in Cornwall in the UK, Frisia in the Netherlands, and Livonian areas of Latvia and Estonia. These share cultural and geopolitical characteristics but all represent distinctive cultural spaces – a rich, revitalising Celtic heritage in Cornwall in the UK’s far south-west; a continuing and solid tradition of bilingualism in Frisia; and geographically dispersed and critically endangered, but re-emerging (Livonian). Each region is experiencing its own forms of the processes outlined above. We will see the challenges that cultural entrepreneurs have in drawing the threads of traditional cultural world-makings through into contemporary lived cultural practices, when these world-makings and place-shapings were developed from an extremely different relationship between people, and local geologies, ecologies, and geographies. I will also observe some of the challenges and tensions of bringing together persons from different world-makings and choices, which are expressed in interviews by a range of attendees at live cultural events (or who are involved within them) in each context. Livonian events were festival gatherings of crafts, songs, speeches, youth groups, and ritual performances; Frisian events were open air theatre performances; and Cornish data came from ancient and new town festivals in Padstow and Penzance. The dataset comprises field interviews in all three contexts, supplemented by semi-structured purposive sampling with a range of people with a stake in the ICH or the minority culture more broadly (see Appendix 1 for more detail on case studies, data, and analysis).

The data suggest that each region is, in its different ways, juggling with the issue that the world in which its cultural world-making was made is gone. These evoke conversations about the question of what the role of outsiders, or newer in-migrants, is in this process. What is the extent to which an incomer can ‘learn’ the symbolic repertoire of local world-making and become a part of it? To what degree is the culture engaging with contemporary challenges about what it means to exist in that space? And to what extent is the local culture something which is valued in as much as it adds ‘colour’ and interest to the locality for visitors and inward migrants?

As Schultermandl et al. put it, ‘stories bring us together, untold stories keep us apart’ (2022). The act of sharing narratives is highly political, having the potential to mobilise politics, publics, and counter-publics through specific types of affective

world-making, creating conscious communities around shared experiences and making hitherto marginalised experiences more visible. I explore these in the following pages. In the next sections, I take each case study in turn, examining the affective stories which emerge around insider—outsider relationships, peripherality, rurality, and cultural world-makings. These should not be read as a definitive take on these entangled relationships, but instead should be read as exposing and exploring elements of insider—outsider entanglements with ICH. The interviews from Livonian areas are chosen to showcase some of the difficulties involved when cultural heritage is separate and divorced from lived experiences and heritage. This raises questions regarding the degree to which persons from outside of the area are able to participate. From Frisia, I examine insider—outsider relationships to cultural performances which actively seek to fold the traditional into present-day lived experiences, using culture to consider contemporary issues. We also observe very similar kinds of tensions between locals and in-migrants as we witness in the Livonian excerpts. I use the Cornish case study to explore the ways in which intangible heritage can be folded into lively, well-attended present-day events and spectacles, which however say little about present-day experience and therefore operate purely as a means of collecting together the community and reasserting communal ties. Sometimes this actively excludes outsiders, and at other times it provides a shared space for all to get involved, but does little to connect ICH to everyday life in the area.

### **Livonian areas**

The excerpts of interviews below are selected in order to think through what happens to insider/outsider relationships when the emphasis is on preserving traditions rather than thinking about how culture helps individuals and communities to navigate everyday life. This is of course a rather artificial dichotomy as there are attempts at cultural updating and fusing traditional Livonian culture with assemblages around contemporary living which warrant greater examination – for example, by making Livonian rap songs. Nevertheless, one of the ways in which Livonian culture was described was with regards to the traditional heritage of folklore. For example, one participant describes how ‘Livonians have their own pop culture, which is mostly folklore’. This is inherently limiting since ‘We have three songs that everybody knows, which we then have to remake in every possible way’, resulting in the need for innovation: ‘Then it is our job now to encourage all kinds of creativity, because preserving cultural heritage is wonderful, but if we do not create something new now, then in a hundred years’ time there will be nothing to preserve’ (L15). The participant here refers to the ways in which the affective assemblages around culture need to be a living thing, with what Henri Bergson ([1907] 2022) calls ‘*élan vital*’ or a ‘life force’, drawing on the past but creating it anew with the resonances and influences of phenomena which come into the affective orbit of Livonian assemblages. To fail to do so renders cultural heritage into a museum piece, rather than as a form of world-making that is an interaction between a people and their lived experiences.

It can also mean that ICH feels less relevant to the assembled ways in which people interpret their lives in the contemporary world, and this can be off-putting. For example, one participant (L6) states that many people locally ‘don’t let their children go to camp’ as there is nothing attractive for them there; so ‘we need to do something modern, so that there is some interest. There are no materials, no films, nothing modern for children – if there was, it would be cool!’. Nevertheless, in a time of intense change such as that which rural communities are experiencing in the post-industrial era, the cultures which arose around lived experiences in the past are very different to the kinds of knowledges, meanings, and structures required in order to navigate the contemporary experience. Consequently, it can feel important to create spaces in which people can consciously learn traditional, or folk, culture in order to ensure that its assemblage retains their affective resonances and impacts. Another participant describes a different perspective on the summer camp as being designed to do just this, to teach children about Livonian ICH. They also speak to how the old folk-ways of traditional cultural heritage have such an affective salience that many local people actively give up some of their time to volunteer to teach them to younger people: ‘Because we didn’t pay teachers’ salaries at the time either, it was all voluntary work’ (L16). The lived experience to which this cultural movement is responding is that of the complexities of navigating intense societal and economic change and the desire to manage the loss, grief, and dislocation that this creates by holding on to aspects of the past, and keeping these memories affectively salient by sharing them with the next generation of young people. What is also interesting is that it was not only persons with Livonian heritage or who had longstanding connections with the region who came to the camp. The participant above signals how also persons from outside of the area, children of more recent in-migrants, were willing to pay to learn traditional culture. Indeed, newcomers seem to be important for maintaining community vibrancy:

We have quite a lot of [newcomers]. I couldn’t do some events without them. This colossal occasion, a totally new, cool modern tradition... absolutely fantastic. Several of [the newcomers] have an ancestral attachment to home, land, property – something historical, yes. But those who maybe don’t... Well, of course they are primarily attracted to the place they have bought – the sea, nature, peace and tranquillity. So they can develop their own ideas, maybe even business ideas and so on. But when they are spoken to, they listen and they are interested. And again, here it is about being able to interest them.

(L14)

Newcomers to the community can play a vital role in cultural events. Future research might focus more explicitly on what Livonian culture adds to the lives of newcomers beyond the local colour of lively events, and so build on the understandings set out here about how incorporating all within the community helps to create local culture anew. There have nevertheless been tensions with regards to incorporating newer members of the community. For example, one interviewee

discusses how camp participants have changed over the years, since for reasons of space and resource, the organisers were ‘Quite serious about, well, selecting children. Last year, the camp was really only for those who have a connection with Livonians, the Livonian and the Livonian Coast. So either descendants of Livonian families or very, very closely related people’ (L16).

One participant, a newcomer of Livonian descent, and very active within the Livonian culture and heritage movement, described a defensiveness which meant that it wasn’t until they shared their ancestry that they were accepted. They say that ‘when I said that I was the grandson of [a local Livonian person], it was different’, and that they were included as ‘one of their own’: ‘It’s no longer ‘what do you want, where are you from’, it’s ‘oh, yeah, oh, yeah, let’s talk’. Obviously, each person has a different way of getting closer and so on. But still, when you say that your ancestors are from here, the attitude is a little bit different’ (L17). The same participant describes the lack of security which exists about some seeing preserving cultural heritage as a kind of fanaticism, whereby in an effort to maintain some kind of ‘purity’ there is much discord around the ‘right way to do things’, leading to ‘that feeling that you’re despised. Not because you have roots like that, but because you’re not doing something right’ (L17). The problem of preservation, conservation, or revitalisation is that it involves having to reinterpret and reimagine the customs and practices derived around a particular way of life in a time where the preserved way of life is completely alien or (as in the case of Livonian) has been partially absorbed into majority Latvian culture. It also seeks to protect ICH against changing and evolving. This inevitably leads to quasi-theological debates around whose interpretation is the most correct and perhaps is a symptom of cultural heritage existing as a historic part of regional assemblages, rather than as something which is folded throughout assembled lived experiences. Gatekeeping operates as a way of conserving unchanging ‘authenticity’ and this is a defensive exercise of insider power, over the risks threatened by those with more choices and social capital. However, making it more difficult for newcomers to become part of ICH world-makings risks narrowing the affective reach of local culture, as outsiders can never personally share that heritage, knowing it as merely the heritage of the place which they call home. It also might isolate Livonians with deep intergenerational roots, but who do not currently engage with any aspect of Livonian cultural heritage.

## **Frisia**

Some of the interviews from Frisia offer us a different way to think through ICH. What makes these events distinctively Frisian is their use of Frisian language (see Zijlstra, Aardema & Moenandar, this volume). One of the striking things from this case study is that the cultural events are not about community happenings that shared local folk culture, but about community theatre performances which addressed affectively salient issues which were connected to questions that extend far beyond the boundaries of Frisia. For example, one play, *Unter Wetter*, was about climate change, which engenders conversations immediately relevant to farming

communities. Less immediately obvious was the performance of the diary of Anne Frank, the Jewish teenager who documented her family's life trying to evade capture by the Nazis during the Holocaust. This is a book that is of wider European significance, discussing the extreme effects of antisemitism, which is still a live issue. It also has other contemporary affective resonances as this speaker highlights 'the tension points' that have 'really had an impact on the audience' as they connected the region assemblage with assemblages far beyond the region, including the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which was very new at the time that these interviews were conducted. As a major European conflict, the Ukraine war was having practical and emotive affects to European and global assemblages, leading to an additional affective dimension: 'I saw some people with red eyes and tissues. Very emotional. It was also very quiet, people just went home afterwards, very impactful' (F43).

The tradition of village plays is a Frisian cultural marker, but the additional thing that made this theatre performance distinctly Frisian was the language in which the piece was performed, the medium through which Frisian world-making evolved, still used in everyday life in the region. One incomer participant describes their experience of the Frisian language:

I do notice when I am visiting people in their homes that they say "but we do everything in Frisian" and I am like that is fine, I can understand it and then I can learn it. But then we are five minutes into the conversation and then it has become Dutch. So I think maybe I should take the next step and learn to speak Frisian as well, but then I would like to do another course at [an organisation offering Frisian language courses]. But yeah if you speak back in Frisian they might keep talking in Frisian as well.

(F45)

We learn a number of things from this interview segment. Firstly, it enforces Frisian as the linguistic medium through which to navigate important aspects of their daily worlds. Indeed, a different participant discussed how learning Frisian was the only way that they were able to communicate with their (non-Dutch speaking) grandparents. But this also provides us with an example of how ICH can be a living thing, encoded in meanings which are transmitted through language, and which both reflects and explains how a group of people live and come to understand the world in which they are situated. This means that the culture is in a continual evolutionary dialogue with the local and wider assemblages with which it has affective connections. Far from merely being an aspect of Frisian regional assemblages, Frisian ICH reaches into many assemblages which are affectively gathered around the region to the extent to which non-Frisian speakers feel the need to learn or improve their use of the language in order to be able to participate more fully, on a more equal set of power relationships. In its dialogue with the now, it also means that it should technically be more inclusive for newcomers with no Frisian ancestry, not just to join in, but to be able to fold intangible culture into their own assembled interpretive frameworks. Of course, to do this more completely, newcomers need to

learn Frisian. Consequently, language inherently keeps Frisian assemblages alive and evolving, and helps to make them more resilient to wider changes.

It appears that non-Frisian speaking persons are encouraged and supported by local people in their journey with the language. For example, a performer unfamiliar with Frisian was well received by the audience, as ‘everyone thought it was really nice that she was open to it’, despite her lack of fluency:

maybe she pronounced some things weirdly, but [...] people also thought it was touching that she wanted to join and commit herself to Frisian. It was a lot of fun, but they also never said “it sounds a bit weird so we shouldn’t do it”.

(F46)

Of course, just because there is an openness towards incorporating newcomers in various elements of assembled cultural practices does not mean that this automatically makes ICH feel accessible by newcomers. The use of a minority language both defends a human interpretive framework which has developed in a close, entangled relationship with local ecologies, geologies, and geographies, and operates as a barrier for newcomers seeking to be a part of the community and also limiting the affective reach of Frisian culture. One newcomer (F50) admitted ‘I do find it annoying, I read the Leeuwarder newspaper, that there is something in Frisian, then I have to read it out loud because otherwise I don’t understand’.

Although this newcomer has taken the time to learn the language sufficiently to be able to understand it, this is much harder work for them than if they were to speak their mother tongue. Encountering a review ‘entirely in Frisian’ they became frustrated, ‘And then I did think, why can’t this be in Dutch, that’s much easier for me’. This means that although they are invited into the living, breathing, growing, evolving assemblages of Frisian ICH, they still find it difficult to engage, and sometimes individuals fear being ‘corrected’ or ‘policed’ as they learn. Here, the power relationships are different to those described by Leebrick (2015), Willett (2016), and Eriksson (2008), in that confident holders of ICH are requiring a degree of fluency in ICH before newcomers (who are welcomed) are able to contribute to evolving assemblages. This is not to point out a lack of inclusion of a community living its life in a minority language – because for the Frisian community to have to start using Dutch for would negatively impact on their own interpretive frameworks. It merely highlights some of the bubbles of tension around the edges of assembled identities, and how those identities are to change over time.

## **Cornwall**

The data from Cornwall illustrates a third use and tension of ICH. Here, ICH becomes a form of spectacle that brings communities together in the present day and shares aspects of folk histories. However, although Golowan festival themes itself around, for example ‘Our Town, Our Planet’ (in 2023), and ‘Back to the Future’ (2022), it is unclear the extent to which this generates any real conversation about

contemporary emplaced experiences. Consequently, this spectacle offers little new commentary on what is happening in everyday world-makings and the types of questions and issues that people experience in the region. These events may therefore struggle in their ability to help local culture to evolve and adapt in response to contemporary questions, although they do help to keep communities connected, which might mean that these conversations can be able to happen in different parts of the region assemblage – which might not be something which is particularly affectively connected to ICH.

For two of the events, ICH is linked with the pagan overtones of cycles of the year, and rebirth from the summer. One Padstonian speaking of May Day felt that

A lot of it for me is about the change of the season. Warding off the winter spirits and celebrating the new growth. Beginning again if you like. [...] It's celebrating the coming in of the summer, the new growth, the new flowers.

(K88)

Likewise, a Penzance-born local situated Golowan midsummer festival in the broader context of Penwith, the far south-west of Cornwall, 'growing up surrounded by stone circles and Neolithic graves and things like that' brings a greater

awareness of the eons of time passing and the measuring of that time passing and being in a rural place, where there's farming and things going on all around which, and fishing, which relate to the tides and the moon, and the sun.

(K78)

For these event insiders, the festivities are threaded through with a Celtic and/or pagan religiosity around the cycles of the year, the earth, and its fertility over the coming summer.

This could be taken to mean that Cornish culture *is* pagan, or at very least that pagan affectivity and Cornish culture are entangled and (at least somewhat) co-evolutionary. In so doing it is drawing affectively resonant connections with a pre-Christian, Celtic heritage rooted in (an imagined) set of overarching principles that govern practices. In the anarchic 'mischief' of Golowan, it might even be described that this is a way of creating culture anew, through play. There are several threads that could be further explored here. Festivals around the cycle of the year are common in many cultures; and we could also ask about the extent to which appeals to Celtic resonances include persons whose ancestry does not extend this far, or whether this is mitigated by appeals to the pagan, which in the UK at least is seeing a resurgence of interest. However, while a playfulness arguably pushes boundaries, for some it could be read as offering a spectacle that does not engage with contemporary questions around living in and on these particular geologies, ecologies, and geographies.

We see this in an interview about the much newer event, the Redruth Mining and Pasty festival, describing how 'real' Cornish culture could be seen as a sense of humour or a cultural way of being. This is expressed through a show which

contributes to the spectacle of the event, rather than an engagement with lived realities. One participant states that

There are people that go that funny over bakery products... there is enough bizarre, weird, quirky stuff that goes on at the Pasty Festival as well. If you want to know what real Cornish culture is like, you just have to go and watch Freddy Zapp and his Elvis impersonator competition.

(K91)

Here, culture is used as a means of collectively letting off steam, rather than to help to navigate contemporary challenges, and links us to questions around the gentrified countryside and *consumption* of culture, rather than a performance of it (see Leebrick 2015). The issue is whether the spectacle provides a further attraction to wealthy in-migrants (which creates exclusions for local people on lower incomes and fewer resources). Alternatively, does culture as a way of being make it harder for newcomers to assimilate? If so, we need to understand the spaces whereby newcomers can come to *learn* the phenomenological meanings underpinning local culture.

That said, these cultural events provide an enormous sense of belonging, or what Putnam (2000) would call social capital. The degree to which these events matter is profound: one Penzance long-term incomer was clear they 'Don't mind missing Christmas, or New Year, but not Montol' (K82), the winter solstice event in Penzance that mirrors Golowan. Likewise, a Padstow local describes how having to work on May Day 'bothered me, and the only way to get through it was to not mark it, just to carry on as if it was a normal day at work and carry on as normal' (K88). Here, the spectacle and collective belonging binds an imagined geographical or cultural community together, territorialising its assembled practices, meanings, attitudes, and values and providing the space for persons embedded in it to know and be known. To use Putnam's (2000) terminology, this creates bonding social capital. In this sense, it helps to protect and maintain something uniquely Cornish, even if people do not have any sense of how this helps them to navigate contemporary challenges.

Creating a version of Cornishness anew, rooted in the ancient past, but creating a spectacle for the contemporary Cornwall-dweller to consume, potentially creates spaces for newcomers to participate more fully. This works with some festivities, such as the newer and more anarchic Golowan. However, for Padstow May Day, the event (and the situation) is riven through with exclusions. The day takes on a huge significance to people from Padstow, both those still living in the town, and those who have moved elsewhere. One of the research team, a newcomer to Cornwall, wrote in their field notes that

I feel quite envious of how powerful that feeling must be for Padstonians, and feel I understand a little bit more that strength of feeling of the importance they give to it. It's a feeling that's hard to create, but other times I've participated in communal culture like singing or dancing is where I can most closely relate to having felt something like it.

(Field notes)

Although many newcomer contributors relate how they have been able to feel at home and belong in Cornwall, others share spaces where they are actively excluded from cultural assemblages or have found it difficult to participate, and which is reinforced by the spectacles which have been created. However, this is complicated by other kinds of exclusions around wealth and power. For example, many people from Padstow are no longer able to remain in communities which their forbears helped to shape because of the cost of housing, which means that children need to be brought up elsewhere. But perhaps a nice quotation to end on is this one from a Padstow local, which demonstrates how belonging and cultural inclusion doesn't have to be automatic, but can be contingent on the way in which newcomers engage in the evolutionary entanglements between culture, place, and contemporary life: 'Anyone who contributes anything to our communities is welcome' (K88).

### **Discussion and conclusion**

I opened this chapter by highlighting the way in which intangible culture and heritage grew as an entangled, co-evolutionary dialogue between a group of people who at one point were bounded by a common place-based identity, the world-making and sense-making of a contiguous group of people, and the ecologies, geologies, and geographies on which they live. To use the phraseology of this book, ICH is a 'voicing' of how people and places have co-evolved. However, in the post-industrial (Western) rural the practices, economies, and institutions around which ICH grew no longer have a purpose as an explanatory tool in order to understand the world around us, or as a set of activities which helps individuals to practically navigate their localities. Even worse, in the post-industrial era there is little sense of what kinds of economies the contemporary rural sustains. As a consequence, the rural has increasingly become seen as a leisure space, and a place where people can enjoy an imagined slower, and better, quality of life (Leebrick 2015; Hilliard 2022; Willett 2021).

The challenges that our case studies experience in terms of high levels of outward migration, widespread inward migration, issues over affordability of local homes, and rural gentrification are not unique to these localities but can be found in many other places, in many other parts of the world (Hines 2010). The challenge for ICH, as we know, is that traditional heritages will lose their affective salience, will no longer be providing affective impacts, and so will become forgotten and lost to time (DeLanda 2011; Coole & Frost 2010). Consequently, it is heartening to see widespread movements towards local festivities and activities that help to keep alive the beliefs, practices, and imaginaries of the past. The act of sharing community and cultural stories helps to create a sense of 'we-ness' that collects communities together, shares cultural knowledges, and mobilises publics (Shultermandl 2022; Putnam 2000), ensuring that ICH retains its potential to have affective impact.

However, one aspect which requires significant further reflection relates to the degree to which this is about simply preserving and conserving a culture as a spectacle or display, or whether it can (or should) extend to community conversations

about local and global questions. At times, this can lead to a defensiveness that tightly draws boundaries around ICH, rather than allowing the openness required to evolve into the future. Bluntly put, if traditional culture was a way of navigating a particular environment in a particular social context (Hilliard 2022), is this same traditional culture also invited to assist the community to navigate tricky issues which present themselves to 21st Century Livonians, Frisians, or Cornish, whoever the people who ascribe to these identities are? If so, then revoicing offers a means of visualising a democratised, evolving ICH which is sensitive to power inequalities. This may go some way to challenging a rural imaginary whereby appeal to traditional cultures and world-makings is an othering which resonates with rural depictions of ‘backwardness’ (see Eriksson 2008; Willett 2016).

In the framing of this chapter I set up peripheries as spaces which have less of an affective impact on the overall body-politic than ‘core’ region-assemblages. A local culture which is too tightly policed and bounded, keeping newcomers outside, may find that its affective impact within the region – and definitely outside of it – becomes dramatically reduced. There is a distinction to be drawn here too, between strong affective impacts *within* affective assemblages, and affective capacity that extends to other assemblages, outside of cultural groupings. In many regards, newcomers, with the networks that they have in other places, could be an affective resource to extend the reach of local ICH into other areas – effectively making peripheries less peripheral. However, the risk is that a reliance on spectacle reduces culture to some form of selling point and local colour. This may indeed reduce the peripherality of the region in the wider imaginary, but ensuing gentrification also brings its own challenges to local affordability, reducing the ability of persons with intergenerational cultural heritage to remain, and entrenching the area as predominantly a leisure space. The issue for (peripheral) regions with rich and deep cultural heritage is how they can navigate this balance of ensuring that their heritage remains a living, breathing thing which helps to inform them as they address contemporary questions; but which also takes advantage of the affective reach offered by their popularity as an in-migrant destination.

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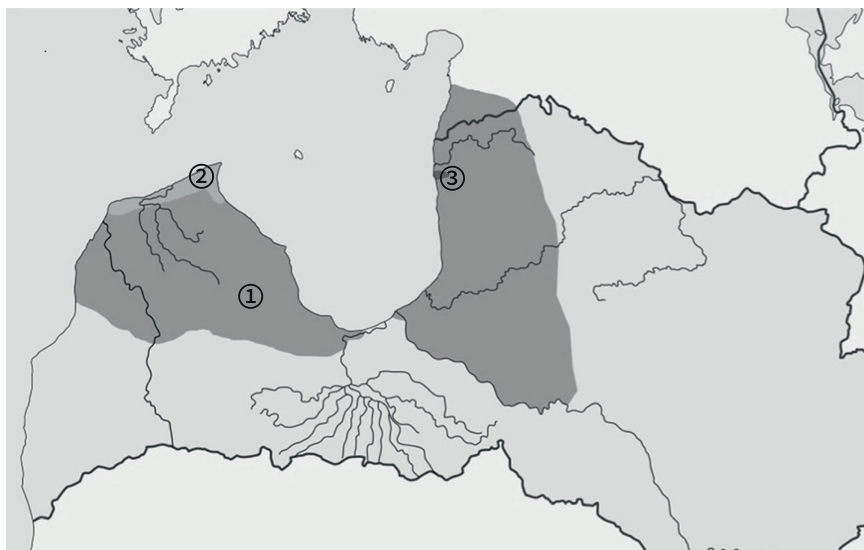
## 8 Revoicing Livonian cultural landscapes on opposite sides of the Gulf of Rīga

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Kadri Koreinik, and Anita Vaivade*

The link between physical landscape and cultural identity is well established, including in the context of European minority cultures (Dołowy-Rybińska 2013; Demska 2019; Nogué & Vicente 2004), and has often been emphasised as a key means by which their visibility and continued vitality can be effected. Nevertheless, national minority cultures' visible presence within the cultural landscapes of the nation-state can vary, closely linked to the power dynamics particular to the relationship between the majority and the minority. For cultures whose physical presence in the landscape is increasingly tenuous as a result of those dynamics, finding the basis on which to amplify visibility – in the absence of tangible features or a basis of local knowledge – can present a challenge. In turn, the dominance of majority cultural signs can even further erase fragile connections to place, with the result that a visitor might be aware of crossing into another region, but be unaware of, or unable to access, its heritage. In this chapter, we describe and analyse the semiotic landscape across two areas of historically Livonian territories – the Livonian Coast; and North Vidzeme and southwestern Estonia – to explore how these processes have shaped these areas' physical landscapes; and to consider how minority and majority individuals' and organisations' agency might be leveraged to deploy intangible cultural heritage (ICH) as a semantic repertoire to revitalise, or revoice, minority cultures' presence in their historic lands.

### **Livonian space(s): past and present**

Once the major ethnic group on the Baltic Sea Coast, by the mid-19th-century Livonians remained in two isolated spots on opposite sides of the Gulf of Rīga: the Salaca Livonians straddling the Latvian-Estonian border and the *Courland* (Latvian *Kurzeme*) Livonians in north-western Latvia (see Figure 8.1). The latter persisted in northern Courland – in the region known in Livonian as *Līvõd rānda*, the *Livonian Coast* – until they were forced into exile during the two world wars and again soon after the Soviet occupation of Latvia. This 60 km-long, 1–5 km wide strip between the sea and a region of dune forests and marshes is where the Livonians endured longest as an ethnically homogeneous group. Of the 2500 Livonian residents of northern Courland in the mid-1800s, approximately 1500 remained by the early 1900s. After World War II, that number dropped drastically: around



*Figure 8.1* Historical Livonian settlement: (1) in the 10th–13th centuries; (2) Courland (the ‘Livonian Coast’) until the 1950s; (3) Vidzeme, until the 1850s (after Blumberga et al. 2019: 9; courtesy of the Livonian Institute).<sup>1</sup>

100–200 Livonians were registered in the Soviet censuses between 1959–1989; in 2023, 166 residents of Latvia identified as Livonian (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia 2023).<sup>2</sup> The Livonian Coast is remote from urban centres, amidst nature reserves and beach resorts for leisure tourism, with fewer than 900 residents across its 14 villages, with some 1500 additional temporary residents who are summer homeowners or tourists during the holiday season. The Vidzeme Livonians (also called the Salaca Livonians) are mainly descendants of the Metsepole Livonians who had assimilated into the Latvians by the 19th century (Cimermanis 2003: 11–27; Sutrop 2014). South-western Estonia has historically been a zone of intense contact, which also experienced redistricting and redrawing of borders and armed conflict in modern times. The coastal strip between Pärnu and Salaca was a border area for centuries. In the Middle Ages, the area north up to Häädemeste was inhabited by Estonian speakers, while the Salaca Livonians settled from Kabli southward starting at the end of the 16th century and until the Great Northern War, when Russian troops destroyed all the farms in this area and most residents were killed (Vunk 2022). Many centuries of neighbouring each other and a century of active communication contributed to a shared linguistic heritage; in north-western Vidzeme, most residents use elements of the Livonic dialect of Latvian in their everyday speech. In 2023, Limbaži, the core area of former Livonian settlement, had about 6700 residents (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia 2023).

The impact of this long history of social and demographic upheaval in the historical heartlands of Livonian culture is a cultural landscape whose present is itself shaped by these pluralistic, shifting identities and manifestations of political power.

In 2018, the ‘Livonian cultural space’, as a set of elements of ICH that feature both traditional and contemporary expressions having Livonian language as a central element, was included in the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Latvia. In 2022, the ‘Vidzeme Livonian cultural space’ was also included in the National Inventory, with another focus: the community of descendants of the Metsepole Livonians, their present-day cultural identities, and their variety of the Livonic dialect of Latvian. The concept of ‘cultural space’ is included in the definition of ‘intangible cultural heritage’ (UNESCO 2003) defined as ‘a place in which popular and traditional cultural activities are concentrated’ and as ‘a temporal and physical space’ (UNESCO 1998: 9): a relevant concept for the Latvian context (Vaivade 2024). In 2021, the Latvian Parliament adopted the Historical Latvian Lands Law, which aims to create the preconditions for boosting Latvian common identity and for the maintenance of cultural spaces in historical Latvian lands, including in Vidzeme and Courland, paying separate attention to the preservation and development of Livonian identity, culture, and language. It stipulates that the State and respective local governments ensure the preservation and sustainable development of Livonian identity and its cultural-historical environment, as well as the preservation of Livonian by promoting its learning and use, and by introducing and using Livonian place names in the landscape. In this context, Livonian ICH is fragmented between the Courland and Vidzeme regions and also between Latvian and Estonian lands. It falls between different definitions, where officials’ attitudes and administrative priorities differ and where both majority and minority knowledge, perspectives and narratives about the Livonian past and present range from engaged activism to adhering to the myth that the ‘last Livonian’ died in the 19th century.<sup>3</sup> Thus, cultural cohesion and a practising community of ICH are hard to come by, leaving Livonian cultural identity open to majority influence and threatening its critical mass.

### **Relationships of space, place, landscape, and identity**

Centuries of displacement and fragmentation of Livonian culture and identity have led to this more ephemeral association with place. As a result, the role of the present cultural landscape gains particular importance as an arena in which cultural belonging – and with it the vitality and resilience of Livonian culture – is shaped and reshaped. Since the late 1980s, geographers have considered the links between place, identity, and meaning; place came to be seen as the consequence of social processes (for an overview, see Withers 2009). The role of landscape, specifically, in reflecting and constructing identity – and with it, processes linked to past and present power and politics – has been widely discussed in critical cultural geography (Cosgrove 1989; see also e.g. Trudeau 2006; Stokowski 2002; Mitchell 2003; Butler & Sarlöv-Herlin 2019), wherein landscapes are understood not simply as neutral physical spaces but as social constructions intrinsically connected to mechanisms, processes, and realisation of power and hegemony. Cosgrove (1989) describes ‘dominant’ hegemonic landscapes (see also Edensor 2002) in opposition to ‘alternative’ ones, where the symbolic geography of each creates and recreates

societal power relations. Seeing landscapes as socially constructed allows us to analyse places as ‘instances of more general underlying social processes’ that have shaped, and that continue to shape, Livonian ICH (see Cresswell 2004: 24). Power relations can manifest not only in (visual) signs (Landry & Bourhis 1997; Scollon & Scollon 2003) but also in spatial relations. Each socio-economic formation, state, or other form of governance endeavours to ‘erase’ the landscape of an earlier formation (Cosgrove [1984] 1998). By considering power dimensions in this light, we can explore processes of national majority and minority cultures existing alongside each other and consider how revoicing might function in a landscape context. We undertake this here using the lens of semiotic landscapes. Semiotic landscapes are akin to linguistic landscapes, which comprise ‘the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings [...] to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration’ (Landry & Bourhis 1997: 25). Jaworski and Thurlow adopt and expand the notion of a linguistic landscape to ‘emphasize the way written discourse interacts with other discursive modalities: visual images, nonverbal communication, architecture and the built environment’, noting that “‘linguistic’ is only one, albeit extremely important, element for the construction and interpretation of place’, and thus define a ‘semiotic landscape’ as ‘any (public) space with visible inscription made through deliberate human intervention and meaning making’ (Jaworski & Thurlow 2011: 2; cf. Pietikäinen et al. 2016). The particular ‘visible inscriptions’ we are concerned with here are those that signify Livonian culture, Livonian heritage, or Livonianness. Data comprise observations from field trips to the respective landscapes and interviews with people living and working in these regions (see Appendix 2).

### **Manifestations of Livonian intangible cultural heritage in the landscape**

#### *Artefacts and landmarks – evidence of traditional lifestyle*

Despite the tumultuous past that Livonian culture has weathered, today the landscape of the Livonian Coast retains some evidence of traditional Livonian life, such as abandoned boats on the beach, jetty piles on the beaches, and fishing gear such as pots, nets, targets, and floats in backyards. Although fishing as a form of traditional livelihood is practised less and less, there are still fish dryers or smokehouses at several homesteads, no longer in use but preserved as a memory marker inherited from previous generations (Figure 8.2). These traces of past lifeways serve to make visible past practices and conjure up a past community that, in its performance of the traditional Livonian method of fish-smoking, creates a layer in the landscape pointing to a social life different from that of the present (cf. Palang & Sooväli-Sepping 2012). These quasi-ghostly remains (Lucas 2010; Edensor 2005) can powerfully evoke the image of people practising Livonian culture, although the extent to which those who encounter smokehouses are aware of what they signify is less clear.



*Figure 8.2* An abandoned smokehouse made from old fishing boats in Pitragas (Livonian Coast) (Photo: Ieva Vītola).

Social and political changes have also affected the character and appearance of the villages. As the residents and their lifestyles have changed, it has become increasingly rare, for example, to see gardens in coastal villages using seaweed as fertiliser, which was traditionally used to improve the quality of the Livonian Coast's sandy soil. Backyard livestock farming, which used to be a typical activity, is now

found in only one household in all 14 villages. Moreover, the Livonian or Latvian blue cow, also called the 'sea cow' (Blumberga & Jonkus 2006) is endangered and rarely seen in the pastures of the Livonian Coast. Once emblematic of the seaside meadows, and still showing increasing numbers in the Latvian Livestock Register, blue cows have become less visible due to the disappearance of small farming – although can still be frequently seen in promotional and place-marketing materials.

Lifestyle changes are inevitably and gradually affecting the landscape of the coastal villages, where summer houses and seasonal recreation now predominate. Modern trends are influencing the remodelling and construction of buildings, which are slowly changing the traditional village architecture and with it the overall sense of place. For example, in recent years, buildings in the village of Pitragi have been repainted in fashionable grey wood stains which look natural, like ageing wood, but diverge from the original look of the village buildings painted in warm colours. These physical traces speak to time-depth, but now they are subject to the influence of majority culture rather than a distinctly Livonian one. The new architecture is a striking and highly visible signifier of the global trend of eco-friendly residential construction,<sup>4</sup> but to the potential detriment of a Livonian sense of belonging. Locals with longstanding place-connections have noticed the change and worry that their village is 'turning blue-grey! Aren't there any other colours in the world?' (L37). Described by more than one respondent as being 'like mushrooms after the rain' (L53), evoking a natural past now being literally paved over, these physical manifestations of the presence of newcomers made one participant 'afraid of the identity that will be created one day' (L6). These opinions do not necessarily reflect an intransigent preservationism. As one stakeholder affiliated with Slītere National Park put it, 'As for the landscape, we are not saying that you have to live like you did in the 18th century, but you no longer have an attitude (of respect) towards the environment that you are creating' (L63).

The threat of losing connection with the land – already tenuous – is expressed by one respondent (L63) as specifically socio-spatial: 'the problem is not seasonality, but the fact that the Livonians don't own land here anymore. All the land has been sold off', evoking the sense of a moribund culture, since now 'we only own the land in the cemetery'. This is directly connected to the demographic shift, since 'the new owners of the land are complete newcomers', with the result that 'they conflict with each other because those who are still living in their homes do not understand how the newcomers can grow and develop, they are unfamiliar with what is developing there. It is completely alien to them'. In some places, this sense of division is also being literally inscribed on the landscape through the addition of fences around homesteads. For example, in the village of Lūžņa on the Livonian Coast, now 'you build a house, build a fence around it, and live in your little bubble' (L17). One respondent, vividly evoking the demographic division reflected in the spatial re-organisation of the land, said: 'I would say that everybody else who is here is a newcomer. That village has become a closed-off ghetto' (L63). Although these views on societal division are not necessarily reflected in the ways that interviewees spoke about newcomers themselves, which were often positive, it seems that the impacts of the changes to the fabric of the landscape can easily

become conflated and attached to the sense of social division. It is easy to see how ‘newcomer’ used as synonym for ‘unattractive house on traditional natural Livonian land’ can solidify into a narrative speaking to social rather than spatial or symbolic divisions.

There are two important landmarks in the cultural landscape of the Livonian Coast: the Livonian Community House in Mazirbe, opened in 1939 (Šuvcāne 2017), and the Livonian Community House in Kolka, opened in 2019. Both function as information centres and meeting places, as well as venues for cultural events. The former, open to visitors between June and August, hosts concerts and exhibitions as well as displays information on Livonian culture, language, villages, and the inhabitants of the Livonian Coast. With its pre-World War II appearance, this building is also a symbol of cooperation between the Livonians and their linguistic relatives in Estonia, Finland, and Hungary (Blumberga 2021). There are two memorial plaques at the entrance, one in Latvian and Livonian, another in Finnish, Estonian, and Hungarian, which read: ‘This house was built by the Livonians with the help of their homeland Latvia and their kindred nations the Finns, Estonians, and Hungarians’. These inscriptions serve simultaneously to bolster a sense of Livonian identity by referring to their collective action, as well as foster an outward-looking perspective that places that collective identity alongside other (majority) nationalities. Indeed, over time, the Livonian Community House in Mazirbe has become one of the most well-known Livonian symbols in Latvia and beyond and is considered the most significant physical manifestation of Livonian cultural heritage. The house has both a symbolic and functional role within cultural revitalisation, with its accessibility providing a means for outsiders to connect with Livonian culture. As a newcomer from another European country told us, in addition to being connected via social media, ‘we also did our own research – we took books from the library, we went to the Livonian culture house in Mazirbe to get a better idea of where we are’ (L54). Enabling such engagement helps provide the means for newcomers to integrate both with people and place. And this can be seen for these particular newcomers, who said that after their research, ‘we realised that this place is special’. This socio-spatial integration is indeed a source of hope for one Livonian researcher of local history (L1), who is positive that ‘most [newcomers] understand where they have come. They respect this heritage, they want to preserve the landscape’. This person is clear that it is not a matter of identity – ‘they can be Chinese, Germans, that’s not the point’ – but of positionality towards a sense of place that takes its cue from the real and imagined Livonian communities that inhabit it:

I would like the newcomers to see this village as a treasure that we must preserve. In what way? Not to destroy it, first of all; to have a landscape, to have interesting things in our own village, to have gatherings, celebrations, activities in our own village, which each community would create using Livonian elements. If only every village had such communities!

Here, social and spatial integration intertwine with the social landscape reflecting a nuanced, aware stance towards the physical. The Livonian Community House

in Kolka, positioned as ‘the gateway’ to the Livonian Coast, was commissioned by Talsi municipality and co-funded by the European Union. The house hosts a tourist information centre and the permanent exhibition ‘Kolka. One Island. Two Seas. Three Languages’, which also gives an insight into the cultural heritage of the Livonian Coast. Various educational and cultural events are held in the Kolka Livonian Community House. Although the building is open all year round, according to one interviewee most visitors are not locals, but summer residents: ‘those summer residents are more interested – they are aware of themselves as a part of the Livonian Coast [...] they came here with respect for this culture’ (L13).

There are important landmarks, too, in Vidzeme. The Pāle Local History Museum in Limbaži municipality is a meeting place for descendants of the Vidzeme Livonians. Extensive genealogical research done by a local historian is accessible in exhibition stands as well as from digital kiosks. Another landmark is the Staicele Livonian Museum, *Pivālind* meaning *stork*. One of its aims is research into Livonian heritage-associated place names in the Staicele area. Furthermore, several pre-Christian sites – hillforts, burial mounds, cult sites – have been found and designated as archaeological sites in the historical territory of Metsepole, but only a few have been investigated and, therefore, cannot be precisely dated. For example, Livonian offering caves on the banks of the Svētupe (lit. *sacred river*; Liv. *Püä+joug*) are an important part of this cultural landscape but also an important source for research on Livonians’ beliefs and religious practices in the early modern period (Laime & Urtāns 2014, 2016).

### *The Livonian tricolour code and flag*

A prominent sign in the landscape of the Livonian Coast is the green-white-blue flag, which was adopted as the flag of the Livonian Union – a Livonian community organisation – in the year of its founding in 1923, but is today seen as the Livonian flag in general. As identity signifiers, flags clearly play an explicit and highly visible role in amplifying the presence – or desired presence – of a bounded and officially recognised community (Wagner & Marusek 2021). Its design is a vivid manifestation of the link between representational identity and spatial practices in the landscape: fishermen earned their living at sea, marked by the blue colour at the bottom of the flag; looking towards their home, they could see the shore of white sands in the middle; and the forest green at the top from a distance (Šuvcāne 2017). Both community buildings fly the flag every day. One stakeholder in Talsi municipality was clear about the role of the flag as one of a number of visual signifiers related to the act of identity-building: ‘we are trying to use Livonian elements whenever possible... Flags, the tricolour, events, place-names, names of all kinds, history – everything!’ (L57). Perhaps surprisingly for such a potent symbol of bounded and distinct identity, many homesteads along the Coast display Livonian flags, a visible representation of Livonianness driven in no small part by newcomers. One non-Latvian newcomer felt that ‘living in this place, it is important for me to have a [Livonian] flag’ (L54). They link this explicitly to place, rather than identity: it would have ‘felt strange’ to put up a Latvian flag, ‘But there is a

big difference between the Latvian and the Livonian flags. We are not Livonians, but because we are in this place, it seems better than flying the Latvian flag'. Their personal identity – non-Livonian, non-Latvian – is felt to be subsumed into the important cultural work of recreating the symbolic link of place and Livonian identity via an act of allyship; whereas 'if we used the Latvian flag, it would seem to me that we were stealing Latvian identity'. This type of symbolic act is seen by another interviewee as appropriation, suggesting that 'there are fake Livonians', recognisable as those who put 'a flag on their car and everything is fine!' (L45). However, it was mostly seen by those Livonians we interviewed as a positive act. One said,

even if they are not Livonian, they have come here with this respect and dignity for this culture. They want to find a Livonian flag, they want that flag to be put up in their backyard every day, they are interested in where they have come.

(L13)

And another: 'I like it that now there is a kind of neighbourliness [...] whoever has roots here, others have no roots at all [but are just] emotionally affected by Livonian' (L43). They link this sense of symbolic place-making directly to a means by which closer social ties may be forged.

This link was a recurring theme in place- and community-making, as in the case of the apparently mutually reinforcing relationship between built environment and community cohesion discussed above. A municipality stakeholder from the Livonian Coast, a newcomer, has a flag which they 'definitely put up at the Livonian Festival, [and] maybe on some other occasions' (L59). The interviewee hints at a sense of social connection created by this symbolic act, as 'I am certainly not the only one in our village, there are several other places where the Livonian flag is flown'. Another person of Livonian heritage who lives on the Livonian Coast (L29) also described the unspoken yet communal nature of this act: 'when we have visitors, we put [the flags] up for the feast. When the household owners arrive in the village, mostly during weekends or on holidays, they also put out the flags'. The flag thus not only signals to others an abstract manifestation of Livonian identity, but also a living presence: 'Then they know immediately that they are at home, that the flag is hung'. This in turn links to broader symbolic uses of the flag in collective moments such as Latvian national holidays and during the Livonian Festival. The Livonian flag on the Livonian Coast thus defines and cultivates the nexus of community-place-belonging in a reflexive way as a symbol that incorporates the shared meaning-making of Livonians. The tricolour code's connection to the Livonian landscape has led to those meanings becoming enfolded into other representational practices; as one Livonian interviewee states, 'for decades the favourite colour combination in the municipality was green, white, and blue. It was completely organic, without thinking' (L57). Increasingly, the colour code is coming to signify 'Livonian' in and of itself, and is widely seen in souvenirs as well as in cake decorations, table settings, jewellery, and handicrafts. As a symbol, the tricolour flag constructs an aesthetic and emotional image of the Livonian Coast for both the local community and visitors.

In the Vidzeme Livonian area with its extension into Estonia, the use of the tricolour is yet to be attested and was not evident during our fieldwork. Nevertheless, as cultural awareness grows, this may begin to change. During the Year of Livonian Heritage (2023), Limbaži (in Latvia) and Häädemeste (in Estonia) municipalities responded to the call to celebrate the Livonian flag, with Limbaži municipality adopting a new design for its flag incorporating the Livonian colours. It will be interesting to observe whether such initiatives can be used proactively such that physical signs effectively reinforce sense of place and identity to revoice the cultural pasts found in the landscape.

### *Livonian place names and Livonian-language signage*

Place names are an important part of linguistic and cultural heritage (Helleland 2022). Besides being links to the past, they have the capacity to build and reinforce identities (Helleland 2012). Toponyms may signal belonging to a group, where the more place names that are known by members of a group, the stronger the bonds are within that group (Helleland 2012: 96). The landscape of the Livonian Coast features Livonian or Livonian-derived place names, and the historical names of the villages – Irē (Mazirbe, in Latvian), Pizā (Miķeltornis), Paņķmō (Oviši) – can be seen on bilingual Latvian-Livonian signs in the villages. Furthermore, elongated dunes (Latvian *kangari*) and swampy depressions (Latvian *vigas*) have Livonian proper names and Latvian appellatives, or in fact, appear as Livonian toponyms borrowed into Latvian: ‘Vīžkangars’, ‘Megiznītkangars’, ‘Otrvalkangars’, ‘Jērikškangars’, ‘Ūdentvīgas’, ‘Kaladvīga’. These are used in everyday communication often without the speaker knowing their Livonian meaning. Similarly, a sense of place is created and maintained by old farmstead names such as ‘Kurgati’, ‘Vīnamegi’, and the newer name ‘Nītaigā’ (Livonian *nīt aigā*, ‘meadow’s edge’). According to our interviewees, newcomers do not generally seem to be in a hurry to change old farmstead names when acquiring property on the Livonian Coast. However, we did come across one exception in the village of Saunags. Since the 1970s, many properties there have been owned by artists who ‘all have whisky-inspired house names because [name] is in the International Whisky Club’ (L49). Although clearly an exceptional example, this shows how readily the cultural landscape can be reinscribed by those who are not alert to the spatial fabric in which intangible cultural artefacts are contained and preserved. Nevertheless, we also documented examples of newcomers’ awareness and respect for the fact that their property lies in the cultural space of the Livonian Coast. In Oviši, there is a house named ‘Ūgas’, which is derived from the Livonian word *ūgandōks* (English *rustle, rustling*). This was sought out by newcomers believing that ‘on the Livonian Coast you must try to find more Livonian names’, and who had proactively gone ‘to the library and looked through the Livonian dictionary’. The combination here of historical rootedness with a creative, evolutionary impulse – ‘That’s how it came into my head’ (L33) – demonstrates, again, how a particular stance from newcomers arising from awareness of, and respect for, the ways in which place is constructed and reconstructed can provide a key means not only for preserving but also revitalising cultural connection to place.

There are other purposive visible markers also found on the Livonian Coast. Not only tourist information boards but also many other signs include Livonian, e.g. *Tienū!* (English *Thank you*) on a rubbish bin in Kolkasrags, or on posters in the Livonian children's and youth camp 'Mierlinkizt'. People are drawn to these small but visible markers and are aware of their role in ensuring that 'people see and think about the Livonian language. The sign has its effect' (L3). Another conscious act of place-making is enacted within cemeteries on the Livonian Coast, which include gravestones with Livonian surnames, memorials in Livonian, and poetic quotes.

In the landscape of north-western Vidzeme, there are a number of place names which originate from a Finnic source and so are visibly related to Livonian, especially those ending in *-urga*, *-āzi*, *-īzi*, *-ule*. There are also old homesteads with historical names, such as 'Karri', 'Rāndas' (Latvian *jūrmala*, English *coast*), 'Kadagi' (Latvian *kadiķi*, English *juniper*). While there has been research on Livonian microtoponyms, documentation of Livonian place names remains fragmentary (Ernštreits 2020; see also Boiko 1993; Sīlis 1996), with a commensurate unfamiliarity amongst our interviewees and an implication of 'otherness' in the cultural landscape: 'the old houses that are here, a lot of them are gone. They all have funny surnames, names. Well, they're all Livonian!' (L72). An Estonian-based stakeholder points to the true meaning of the school name 'Metsapoole' (literally 'towards the forest', or metaphorically 'someone is nuts') suspecting that 'this is not a well-known fact. Not that much is known about it' (E2). And yet, as with the Livonian Coast, the association with place identity is keenly felt, as another Estonian stakeholder, when asked what the word 'Livonian' evoked, said, 'Well, I know that I was born in Livonia [...] because this village is called Metsapoole, that's the old Livonian name 'Metsepole'' (E3). Interestingly, this knowledge had not been proactively sought out, as in some of the examples above, but rather 'I've somehow known this since I was a child. And because of this I know that the Livonians lived here'. Here, the place name not only functions as a container of Livonian identity but also as a means in itself of intergenerational cultural transmission, the memory and knowledge of the Livonian past literally inscribed into place. Despite this relative lack of knowledge, in the landscape of north-western Vidzeme, Livonian links are often more explicit, as there are several place names containing the appellation 'Lībiešu' (English *Livonian*). For example, in the names of ancient sites of worship (*Lībiešu upuralas* 'Livonian offering caves', *Lībiešu pilskalns* 'Livonian hillfort'), and also business and street names (e.g. *Lībiešu iela* 'Livonian Street' in Limbaži). Place names with the same ethnonym are also common in the landscape of the Livonian Coast. Beyond place names, our fieldwork documented four places in the landscape in north-western Vidzeme where the language is used. Two are in Staicele. One is a sculpture, *The Border Stone*, which includes the names of Estonia, Latvia, and Livonia in each language, while the other is at the Staicele Museum – a sign in Livonian with the word *Pivālind* (English *stork*). Another example is on the information stand by the Livonian hillfort in Mazsalaca, which displays tales about the Salaca River in Livonian. The fourth and most recent example is located near Vidriži, on the banks of the Aģe River. The owners of a house

have made a multilingual sign out of an oak tree with its name also translated into Livonian – *Aḡā sūrtām* (English *The Great Oak of Age*). These four examples reveal only sporadic knowledge about – and commensurately visibility of – the Livonian heritage of these places.

### **Discussion and conclusion**

In the context of the social construction of landscapes, there is much here that can inform our understanding of revoicing. For the fragile Livonian culture, links to place enacted via symbols clearly take on particular importance. The instances outlined in this chapter demonstrate how Livonian signs in the cultural landscape signal different things to different people. As in other minority cultural contexts globally, they act as containers of cultural knowledge and as a visible sign to outsiders that they are entering a different cultural space (such as bilingual signage and tourist memorabilia which include the Livonian colours); and as a visible sign to insiders of Livonian presence (such as raising Livonian flags) that functions not only symbolically as an identity marker but also practically to aid community cohesion. Indeed, this link to social cohesion is readily, albeit seemingly unconsciously, made by our informants, and the fact that newcomers are seen to be joining and being met with a mostly positive response is an indication that this symbolism can function beyond simply being a declaration of one's own identity. However, the cultural and social work done by these symbols can, by the same token, be a source of division, as witnessed in the perspectives expressed regarding the built environment as driven entirely by 'newcomers' – now cast in a more negative light – and other outside forces reinscribing the familiar landscape. The case illustrated here – where majority and minority identities co-exist both within and between individuals – thus demonstrates some of the ways in which the contestedness (and reconciliation) of landscapes can manifest itself. Both spaces – the Livonian Coast and north-western Vidzeme – are characterised by their low population density as well as fragmentation of communities sufficiently imbued in Livonian culture to practise its ICH. However, reflecting the different contexts and external and internal forces acting on the culture, there are certain differences in the manifestation of ICH in these landscapes. The use of Livonian flags and their associated colour scheme is widespread on the Livonian Coast but not in Vidzeme and south-western Estonia. On the Livonian Coast, Livonian is displayed on (multilingual) signs. In Vidzeme, by contrast, its historical Finnic cultural and linguistic characteristics – including those found in this region's variety of the Livonic dialect of Latvian – are present in place names and actively displayed; however, recognising these as being representative of this Finnic and Livonian heritage demands linguistic knowledge. Although evidence of Livonian heritage is not immediately visible in the landscape of north-western Vidzeme, there is a strong sense of belonging among the descendants of the Vidzeme Livonians. That sense of belonging was partly boosted by memory institutions, which are proactively amplifying the presence of Livonian heritage in this area.

To return to Cosgrove's distinction between 'dominant' and 'alternative' landscapes: these contrasting pictures suggest that it might be useful to draw on his sub-types of alternative landscapes: *residual* (traces of past cultures whose original semantic meaning has been lost), *excluded* (subaltern, non-hegemonic cultures whose symbolic geographies differ from that of the dominant), and *emergent* (utopian spaces that seek to offer alternative presents or futures) (Cosgrove 1989: 131ff). This typology can offer one clue as to how revoicing might function in the context of a minority cultural landscape. Interestingly, this analysis has arguably surfaced all three types of alternative landscape. Firstly, residual landscape features are seen particularly in Vidzeme, where archaeological sites and the Livonian substrate in place names do not find their corollary in a living cultural practice and require specialist linguistic knowledge to resonate; and to some extent on the Livonian Coast, where disused fishing boats and smoke-houses are variously celebrated or forgotten by inhabitants and visitors alike. Engagement in residual landscapes – in the form of attempts to revive the latent traces – can involve, as here for example, a newcomer seeking out a Livonian dictionary to choose a name for their homestead in traditional Livonian fashion. This has also led to artistic and creative works being created in the 'gap' that the erasure of symbolic presence has enabled.

Secondly, while both spaces are by definition *excluded* insofar as they represent a culture that is not the national majority, the Livonian Coast's increasing amount of Latvian-Livonian bilingual signage and the visibility of other cultural signifiers such as the Livonian flag and associated colours – as well as their touristification – points to a culture co-existing alongside, and crucially often despite, the dominant majority cultural and institutional practices, and is one way in which its pervasive invisibility is being resisted. The increasing visibility of excluded landscapes can result in a more general preoccupation with history and place that informs how tourists, permanent and temporary resident newcomers, and Livonian inhabitants themselves engage with and move around in space, and, in turn, the nature of their perspectives on (and potential engagement in or allyship towards) Livonian culture.

Finally, there is evidence here too of what might be understood as an emergent landscape – the coexistence of diverse actors learning anew what the relationship between minority culture and place has been, and continuing to fashion for the future what it could be (see Willett, this volume, for the notion of an evolving contemporary, polyvocal world-making linked to place). These emergent landscapes might be said to constitute acts of revoicing, and the task for those seeking to ensure the resilience of minority cultures in the face of the changing demographic forces at play, both historic and contemporary (some of which are vividly described here, particularly in relation to the built environment), is to leverage such examples to find ways to further their prevalence. For any minority culture within a cultural space shaped by the majority, the possibilities of an emergent landscape that is not so much hybridised (although it may be that, too) as revoiced by a more polyvocal range of actors. Revoicing in this context involves seeking ways to ensure that these alternative landscapes can become emergent: converting residual or excluded landscapes to ones in which majority individuals may contribute to a

future minority (landscape) identity. This may be a conceptual underpinning but can also be practical. Even the occasions of dissonance between minority and majority landscape authors (such as through increasing awareness that planning rules can have a tangible impact on sense of community and identity, as suggested by the conflation of unwanted development and ‘newcomer’ activity) can be learnt from to articulate ways that the boundaries and affordances of all in imagining and shaping minority landscapes can be leveraged so that place, culture, and social cohesion around living identity and heritage, including where that heritage is latent and fragile as with Livonian, can present a realistic vision for the future.

## Notes

- 1 The authors would like to thank Zane Ernštreite for providing this version of a map originally published in Blumberga et al. (2019).
- 2 In the 2021 census in Estonia, ten residents reported Livonian ethnic identity, including five in Tallinn and four in rural areas (Statistics Estonia).
- 3 The narrative of ‘the last Livonian’ refers to Gusts Bisnieks (1793–1868) who lived at Svētciems manor and learned the Vidzeme Livonian language (Noriņa 2018). Miķelis Krogzemis, who wrote under the pen name Auseklis (1850–1879), was a well-known Vidzeme-born poet in Latvia. He wrote the poem “Thoughts of the Last Livonian at the mouth of the Salaca River” which may have been based on Bisnieks.
- 4 Sustainable architecture was declared standard practice by the Union of World Architects’ World Congress in 1993 (Coma Bassas, Patterson & Jones 2020). Since then, there have been calls for local, natural, and low-embodied energy and materials such as sustainable wood and water-based adhesives.

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## 9 Taking up space

### Physical and affective geographies of intangible cultural heritage events

*Lucy Frears and Laura Hodsdon*

Cornwall, in the far south-west of Great Britain, is only seven miles wide at its narrowest point. Surrounded on three sides by the sea, it has among the lowest permanent population densities of the UK (Office for National Statistics 2021), and much of the region is served by a single main road. Historically, its main industries were fishing and mining; today, despite having towns and a city, Cornwall is marketed to tourists with a romanticised vision of its rural and coastal remoteness. Traditional industries would likely have left the landscape empty: with miners underground (though with ‘balmaidens’ smashing stones above ground) and fishermen at sea, there must have been a spaciousness, a lack of visible ‘busy-ness’ (Tuan [1977] 2008: 61). Yet the number of visitors in peak season clashes with the marketed image of quiet rurality that draws to some extent on this historic imaginary. Small fishing villages frequented by tourists easily become blocked by traffic. A boom in holiday rentals, plus an increase in new permanent and temporary residents, has resulted in many local people priced out of their town centres, previously the locus of the community (Duignan 2019). As Tuan observes, ‘ample space is not always experienced as spaciousness’ ([1977] 2008: 51), and ‘for everyone a point is reached when the feeling of spaciousness yields to its opposite – crowding’ (Tuan [1977] 2008: 59). The issue of space, clearly, figures prominently in the region’s social dynamics. In the context of its intangible cultural heritage (ICH), crowds have traditionally been essential for the liveliness of annual gatherings: the place to meet with extended family, to cook and have an open house, to meet new people, perhaps future partners (Frears 2010). In the present day, too, cultural events are widely acknowledged to be an opportunity to build community (e.g. Duffy & Mair 2014; Arcodia & Whitford 2006) to the extent that they are the annual focal point for many local people. But of course, alongside increased tourism and other demographic changes, it is not only the local community celebrating, as may have been traditionally the case. Known and unknown participants must share space and see each other close-up. Just as there are tensions between insiders and outsiders in Cornwall as a whole, these events offer ‘an arena where negotiation is forced upon us’ (Massey 2007: 154).

In this chapter, we consider the way space functions at two ICH events in Cornwall: both as microcosm of, and reaction to, the spatial relations that are enacted and negotiated within Cornwall’s wider socio-cultural landscape. We understand

space as socially constructed – that is, that ‘meaning is invoked in space through the practice of people who act according to their interpretations of space, which, in turn, gives their actions meaning’ (Cresswell 1996: 17). We use concepts of space and place together, and following Massey we consider ‘space as the product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions [...] as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity [and] therefore of coexisting heterogeneity, [and] as always under construction’ (Massey 2007: 9). This heterogeneity constitutes the ‘throwntogetherness’ of place (Massey 2007: 140). At ICH events attended by all from insider to outsider, there is a ‘*practising* of place’ characterised by ‘the negotiation of intersecting trajectories’ (Massey 2007: 154, emphasis in original), in which ‘imaginings of space and place are both an element of and a stake *in* those negotiations’ (Massey 2007: 155, emphasis in original). Given these intertwining understandings – that people’s meanings affect space, and space affects people’s meanings – we consider how space constructs and is constructed by the interactions between insiders and outsiders at ICH events.

We focus on two events in Cornwall, UK: Padstow May Day, a centuries-old tradition in which people process through the streets behind costumed ‘Oss’ figures; and Golowan, a revived Midsummer festival in Penzance. Both events involve extensive use of public space, with the towns themselves providing a ‘stage’ as much as a backdrop for the activities, as will be explored in more detail below. On May Day, Padstonians walk, dance, play drums and accordions and sing while processing through the town’s streets with the Osses that come out of their ‘stables’ (two buildings co-opted for the occasion). ‘Mayers’ can be differentiated from spectators by wearing white trousers and shirt with neckerchiefs and ribbons in their party’s red or blue colours. Mazey Day is the main day within the week-long festival of Golowan. Local schoolchildren make costumes, ‘images’ (gigantic papier mâché creations that are carried on floats or the shoulders of those processing), banners and flags, and process them through the streets; and at other times participants form a skipping and hopping human chain to perform the ‘Serpent Dance’. We consider the events as examples of ICH events in Cornwall to explore how physical and affective space mediates insider–outsider relations within its socio-cultural landscape. In keeping with our lens that takes people and space as mutually constitutive, first we consider *Town as stage*: the performance space itself as a site in which the event takes place and across which people move and interact. Second, *People as actors*: the embodied space as taken up and experienced by individuals within the broader flows of people and activities.

### **Town as stage**

In this section we focus on how the event space is shaped by the physical features of the town. The interplay between the tangible, physical geography and the intangible performance of the event is, as this analysis will show, of paramount importance. As one interviewee put it: ‘Golowan is the festival of Penzance, so you couldn’t transpose it, and make Golowan happen somewhere else’ (K78). Indeed, the events are so rooted in place that, for some, the identities they express

are synonymous not with a broader imagined community of Cornish culture, but a community of place comprising those local to the town: ‘it’s a Padstow thing, not a Cornish thing’ (K85) (this may also be imbricated with a more local-level community of ancestry – see Moenandar, Moran-Nae & Hodsdon in this volume for different notions of community).

### *Town as inclusive*

As these interviewees suggest, the town plays a distinctive role in the events, shaping behaviour, and as setting, stage, and scene. The town has the potential both to co-create the event’s action and to provide a backdrop through which individuals can affectively experience it. Place and event develop around and within each other, as one Penzance local who moved to the town as an adult put it: ‘you’ve got such an incredible infrastructure here with these ancient granite port walls [...] it’s an absolutely amazing place to have a festival, it’s almost like the town was designed around the festival’ (K70). For some, the town’s physical infrastructure plays an active role in creating an immersive experience. Accordions and fiddles can be heard, drums boom – the invitation to people to participate is amplified (Duffy 2000), and participants can hear ‘the sound of Mazey Day just, like, reverberating around – that’s really cool’ (K83). In Padstow, too, the buildings’ sonic effect becomes an intangible feature reflecting the event back on itself: ‘we do have that nice compact town, with narrow streets, where the drums echo, and we can [...] all assemble in a big square’ such that, likewise, ‘it would be difficult to try and transplant that to somewhere else’ (K87). This rootedness in place reinforces for some a diachronic, as well as synchronic, link and sense of immersion. One interviewee who moved to Penzance as an adult pointed to the Cornish etymology of ‘Penzance’ – *Pennsans*, ‘holy headland’ – as evoking both spatial and spiritual connections, and vividly sketched the spatial relation of the processional route in relation to the town and its surrounding landscape:

the harbour and Chapel Street is such an ancient route that goes straight up to Madron, up onto the moors, up to the [prehistoric standing] stones. That processional route that we go up and down is being used for thousands of years.  
(K82)

Similarly, for the same respondent, landmarks within the town are associated with past communities: ‘The Turk’s Head, people have been using that pub and that road for at least a thousand years’, which is clearly anchored in personal meaning and experience. Here, an anchoring to place via heritage is established not via the individual’s own ancestry but rather via a personal, affectively and intellectually forged connection with the place itself.

The event offers an opportunity for intergenerational transmission on a shorter timespan, too. At both events, for many of those we spoke to participation seemed to forge a deeper connection with the place and its history. One Penzance local spoke about ‘All the children having a chance to process down the street. It’s almost like

an initiation [into] being a citizen of Penzance [...] People feel pride in it and feel very much that it is their festival' (K78). This in turn leads to the inextricable relationship between the place itself and the people's participation: 'Because there are so many ways in which people are involved, it's like, it's not like a festival that happens in Penzance, it's a Penzance festival' (K78). Interestingly, while ICH as 'transmitted from generation to generation' is an integral aspect of UNESCO's definition in the 2003 ICH Convention (ICHC), the sorts of transmission observed here in Penzance – which can just as fully be experienced by a recent resident newcomer, especially should they happen to have school-age children – implicitly fall outside of the notion that there is a definable group of culture bearers defined by intergenerational transmission. This aligns with a notion of ICH communities of place at its most literal and therefore at their most inclusive (see Moenandar, Moran-Nae & Hodsdon, this volume).

### *Town as exclusive*

Conversely, however, the slim streets and inclines of ancient towns like Penzance and Padstow – compared to the large, flat fields at music festivals, for example – can create restrictions. Some participants at Mazey Day felt that these physical barriers could restrict disabled access, exacerbate crowds, and limit access to seating and facilities. Although crowds were tolerated by some ('it's lovely to see the town busy, because you never see it like this' (K62)), they were one of the most prominent negative sentiments we encountered: 'I guess it's just the amount of people, trying to get through' (K32). For performers, too, this can have direct impact – such as for one Mayer who described being unable to operate the bellows on their accordion due to a crowd (K86). As we noted above, the gathering of many people is the defining feature of events such as these – and indeed, intrinsic to the very existence of ICH itself are the people to perform it. But ironically, the physical, practical constraints are a convincing rationale for limiting participation and attendance; indeed, as UNESCO has noted, in ICH contexts tourists are increasingly participating in festive events, and while there may be positive aspects to tourist involvement, the festivals often suffer (Convention Article 2: Definitions).

The physical space can also place limits on the event's content itself. The papier mâché images carried in the Mazey Day procession, key to displaying the creativity and shared labour of local participants, are increasingly colossal, meaning that since 'our streets are quite narrow [...] there are lots of things to negotiate in terms of how wide the processional images can be' (K79). With significant numbers of spectators and little or no signage (again, contrary to an event such as a music festival that is not spatially anchored), crowding is a logistical as well as a perceptual issue. Organisers have to adapt to work with available space, despite increasing spectator numbers. As argued above, to move an event from the specific locality because of overcrowding would render it wholly transformed, no longer the same event. And indeed, spatial restriction can spark creativity, influencing the form of the images, for example. The physical town – again operating as a co-creator – has

also led to the proactive creation of smaller events within the main event, such as a music stage or funfair, which help disperse and distract crowds.

While on one hand these smaller (often static, rather than processional) activities offer a greater range of opportunities for engagement, conversely some are not publicised and are thereby explicitly or, more usually implicitly, restricted (see Hodsdon, Ozoliņa & Zijlstra, this volume, on outsiders' navigation of these 'rules' of inclusion or exclusion). The town's spatial restrictions create an opportunity for smaller, more spontaneous acts and agency by insiders who leverage local connections, or benefit from their more intimate knowledge of the affordances of the space. Crucially, at Golowan this has inevitable implications for who is able to participate in them, despite the stated inclusiveness of the event, since

there is a sense, when there's tens of thousands of people who descend on your town to have a nice day out, there are certain things which you'd like to not publicise, so there aren't tens of thousands of people observing something that is more participatory.

(K78)

While many elements of Mazey Day are marked in the event programme, other elements are not advertised or are described only vaguely in terms of time and place, since 'It shouldn't all be in the programme [...] it's part of the magic. You shouldn't know everything that's going on' (K84). In Padstow, where there is no programme, spectators eager to know what's happening reveal themselves as outsiders: 'I've had people ask, when I'm going around collecting, "oh are you doing this or that..." If you've got to ask, then you're not going to know' (K85).

In their towns, then, insiders take control of space – and as such claim a certain power – for the day. They access information through connections, or hints that can lead them to key moments: 'you kind of know where things are happening, or something's about to happen because the people who are on the inside who are doing it will suddenly disappear down an alleyway or, or start moving in a certain direction' (K79). Part of participating as an insider is being able to read the signs in the crowd and work out a route spontaneously: knowing which 'little ginnels, hops, alleyways' (K80) to slip down to get around a knot of people. Visitors or incomers with less knowledge have to search for other clues, as one of our field notes from May Day describes:

There is a fairly large crowd gathered and an anticipatory atmosphere, people unmistakably watching for something – so I join it. We can hear, quite faintly, the drums [...] I wait for about 10 minutes, and nothing changes. Then with no apparent sign, the crowd disperses. I [follow two people in white] and find I'm in a flowing crowd [...]. Another crossroads where there is another crowd waiting, standing expectantly. Finally the Red Oss party comes down the hill, and I can hear the accordions and see the procession.

(Field notes)

People thus have different spatial experiences depending on the extent of their insidership. This results in ‘parallel’ event experiences: one for outsiders who may have difficulty navigating the space without the maps and guidance in a programme; and one for insiders whose intimate knowledge and connections mean that they can use the spatial limitations as an affordance to create, often spontaneously, the event for themselves without ever being explicit about who such activities are for.

There are implications here, too, for conceptions of public versus private space. The empowering effects of becoming ‘protagonists of [one’s] society’ by processing in public (Shevstova cit. Abercrombie & Longhurst 1998: 57), can have unintended consequences. On one hand the local, inward-oriented focus (as one Padstow insider put it, ‘we just want it to be just us’ (K88)), integral to the intended audience of insiders, can function to frame the town conceptually as temporarily quasi-private. But although May Day is, as described by another Padstonian, ‘something private that takes place in public’ (K85), this public-ness by definition removes physical, legal, or social barriers to entry, such as property boundaries, or pay-point gates. Town businesses, which, according to Padstonians (K87, K88), are now rarely owned by locals, seek to attract outsiders by ‘selling’ May Day as a visitor attraction within a host–guest tourism paradigm (see Hodsdon & Moenandar, this volume), to which many local people do not subscribe. The implication is that anyone is free to attend and move around; but, in reality, outsider spectators are not considered, by Padstonians, to be part of May Day or, indeed, necessarily welcome. The event spaces that visitors encounter are disorientingly, for them, *un*-like a touristscape, where

Space is organized to encourage a performative disposition to gaze upon such spectacles and scenes through visual consumption by various techniques such as the positioning of key features at the end of uncluttered passages, and the siting of information boards and markers, and the installing of benches at preferred spots, or even the injunctions inscribed on signs that recommend photographs be taken.

(Edensor 2007: 208)

The event site may be perceived, then, *simultaneously* as quasi-private by insiders but fully public by outsiders. The towns shape how the events develop, but their affordances can – either inherently or by design – exclude visitors or fail to accommodate their needs.

### ***The town turned upside down? Repurposing and reshaping physical space***

The malleability (or not) of existing infrastructure in shaping and delimiting content and participation is mirrored (and perhaps reinforced) by a repurposing of that infrastructure that creates an illusory, ambiguous state. In both cases, the familiar towns undergo a transformation: greenery is cut in the early morning and already decorates lamp-posts and railings by the time many people emerge – de-urbanising the space and creating unfamiliar place-markers. Colourful flags line the streets.

The day is clearly a special day: the boundaries, meaning, and power dynamics of place have shifted, even if this only lasts until the leaves of cut branches wilt. The town, now a performance space, flexes during the event so that it ‘overlay[s] physical space, making symbolic use of its objects’ (Lefebvre 1991: 39). Roads are blocked off; crowds replace traffic; shops expand onto pavements; funfairs and marquees take over car parks. Markers within the space are repurposed: a former shop becomes an exhibition space; a statue of Penzance innovator, Humphry Davy, is dressed up; bollards, moorings, and walls become seats.

Space is also reclaimed from those who often take up or take over space. This reclamation might be over antisocial ‘others’, so that on event day for one Penzance local ‘it’s like it’s everybody’s space again, you know? [...] the idea that we could all share that space and be happy together again’ (K77). Or it might be over the usual hierarchy of traffic: people are prioritised over cars for the day, which can have not only a practical effect but an affective one in which the identification with place is consolidated and reinforces the sense that, for a Penzance local who moved there as an adult, ‘this is our town, this is our streets...’ (K66). Recasting space can also create a fantasy vision in which the town is a perfect version of itself, since ‘when you go through Penzance sometimes, it feels like it’s derelict. And we use that space at Golowan to celebrate our community and it doesn’t feel derelict at all. It feels magnificent. It feels vibrant, interesting’ (K77). This renegotiation of space can lead to an illusory impression that the transformation will continue to exert influence over the everyday world. Next day, the temporary rules are no longer valid, potentially leading to disorientation, when for one Padstonian, ‘quite literally, there is no distinction between road, non-road’ with the consequence that ‘quite often [...] afterwards, I have to be careful crossing roads because I literally forget that cars will not just stop for you’ (K85). Although certain markers of the day, such as colourful flags in Penzance, now stay up for months, most disappear quickly. While there are elements of carnival (especially at Golowan such as the ‘mock mayor’ election) that speak to possibilities for redrawing the social order, in these contexts the implications for social change seem to be manifest, rather, in the profound importance and value of the event in participants’ socio-cultural lives.

### **People as actors**

How individuals interact with space – and other people in that space – is, as we have just seen, intrinsically linked to their understanding of themselves and their positionality within it. Although, as we showed above, the physical features of the towns are intrinsic to the performance of the events, as Massey notes,

what is special about place is not some romance of a pre-given collective identity or the eternity of the hills. Rather, what is special about place is precisely that throwtogetherness, the unavoidable challenge of negotiating here-and-now [...] a negotiation which must take place within and between both human and nonhuman.

(Massey 2007: 140–141)

And indeed, our data suggest that these events perform the important function of providing space to reforge fragile connections when ‘it’s nice to bump into people you haven’t seen [...] ‘cos the only time you see them is once a year at this place’ (K41). One Padstow interviewee views this explicitly in the context of the wider social change that has fractured the sense of community:

...it’s a time when I connect with a community [...] that I genuinely don’t see elsewhere throughout the year because Padstow’s a community that’s been very hollowed out by economic and social changes and May Day is the time when that community exists and probably the only time it exists now, so it’s very significant to me.

(K87)

Gathering together physically in the same space is a human need (Duffy & Mair 2021), and ‘the impacts of this togetherness are almost immeasurable’ (Duffy & Mair 2021: 18). This impact is cemented by annual repetition – a feature that, as Hobsbawm & Ranger (1983) describe, plays a vital role in establishing, or implying, a link to the past, where one might think of lost friends and relatives and ‘hear their voices still when I go to things like Golowan’ (K77), affirming a diachronic community linking present practice to past generations. Notably, this intergenerational link has been firmly established at Golowan even though the event has only had the time of one generation (being revived in 1991) to embed itself in the socio-cultural fabric of the town. This association can also lead to different relationships with the physical landscape as the event is performed: one Padstonian (K85) described going to the town cemetery the day before May Day to ‘Put ribbons on the graves, flowers on the graves, drinks poured on the graves’. Not only does this practice continually remake connections with community members across as well as within time, it enables the individual to see themselves within that continuum, an eternal link to place and community enacted directly via the event: ‘I’ve already got a plot there [...] Not so much being remembered, but I’m still taking part’. This spirit is embedded in the more formal acts, but the celebration also creates space and time for small spontaneous moments that hold deep significance for individuals. One Padstonian described ‘an older guy who’s gone downhill’ to whom they were ‘able to bring the Obby Oss across to him, and I was able to see his face, and I was able to see his eyes widen and I was able to watch him clamber out of his wheelchair to stand up and hold the club – and that’s what May Day is, that’s what May Day means’ (K87).

This and other similar comments suggest that it would be hard to overstate the social and cultural importance of the events for those who celebrate them. This importance and local pride on the day of the event is manifested by insider bodies physically taking up space. Padstonians – clearly demarcated by their bright, white clothes – walking into town seemed, as one of us wrote in our field notes, ‘to carry themselves so that they are wider, taller, take more space and stride so that it’s clear who gets out of the way – us! Chests up, shoulders out, smart hair and flower, confident stride’ (Field notes). This observation is borne out by the way in

which interview respondents from Padstow described their experiences of space on the day, embodying the shift in power relations that the co-opting of public streets usually thronging with tourists enables:

I think when I walk around Padstow on May Day, I might feel like I own it. When I walk around Padstow in the middle of the summer, I feel like, I don't know where I am, I could be anywhere, but yeah, when we play those drums and we walk out of the Institute, it's ours, and it's not ours the other 364 days of the year [...] We don't own the roads, but for that day we do, and we don't own the town, or holiday homes or the pubs anymore, but we can stand there on May Day and we can stand around the maypole and it feels like we are in the right place: it's ours again.

(K87)

This statement vividly depicts the inextricable relation of the ICH felt as a microcosm of the wider social dynamics of place, where here – at least in the present moment, in 'the right place' – there is power to counter them. Similarly, one respondent from Penzance found that the embodied experience of the procession had a comparable effect: 'I think there's something in that idea of procession that is maybe about claiming your space, [...] claiming's not the right word, but maybe asserting your existence in this place, in this moment, as a community' (K78). On event days, the power relation at the level of the individual body between the local and the visitor, the temporary and new resident, is flipped. Local insiders take up space, assert their existence, reclaim and dominate space.

However, although insiders' spatial interaction undergoes a clear shift on the day, this new spatial landscape may not even be noticed by first time visitors. The lack of familiarity with regular place-markers may leave those unfamiliar with the town with no means of orienting themselves as to the shift in power dynamics between insiders and outsiders: 'It hasn't given me a huge insight into Cornish culture at all, it's just people dressed-up doing weird stuff, but it's great' (K52). Outsiders, even those aware of their positionality, still felt as though they were a part of the event. Tourists interviewed at the events often related embodied engagement with the culture: being moved by singing, drums and accordions, or literally consuming it – eating and drinking pasties or cider, traditional Cornish fare (and, of course, another form of ICH). This lack of awareness of the temporary redrawing of spatial boundaries can result in misalignment between the festival and non-festival planes, leading to dissonant, and potentially contested, spatial dynamics between those participating and those not, who may end up actively disrupting the event. One interviewee described jostling for space with a 'large black Land Rover' – a vehicle that often symbolises tourists in local parlance – attempting to make its way along the street in Padstow during May Day, and admits, 'I did put my pint on the bonnet because I thought what they were doing was gauche [...]. I don't think what they were doing was polite or in the spirit of the festival' (K91). How the 'perpetrator', the driver in this case, reacts to the spatial dissonance they have caused can in turn further affect the dynamic between the

participants and outsiders who have not adapted to the spatial rules of the day. This perhaps stands as a metaphor for the wider spatial struggles within the physical and social confines of Cornwall. Precisely the same dynamic was observed at the Livonian Festival in Latvia. A driver seemed oblivious to the speeches taking place and only reluctantly switched off his engine when the road was literally blocked by the bodies of the participants (Field notes). Crowds of outsiders not knowing how to behave during events – again, manifesting the co-existence of separate planes of experience in the same time and space – can increase tension as their behaviour may practically interfere with key elements of the event. For one Padstow interviewee, as mentioned above, it is ‘annoying’ when the streets are so crowded that ‘the accordions to have problems to actually play’ (K86). How bodies negotiate with each other, as well as with the confines and affordances of the space itself, can thus be read as a reflection of broader power dynamics taking place at a societal level around spatial, ‘economic and political encroachment’ (Taylor 2016: 153). There is a perpetual ‘jostle’ between insiders and outsiders as they seek to define and claim their spaces. Massey describes the ‘continuing daily negotiations and struggles, sometimes quiet and persistent, sometimes more forceful, through which day in and day out these spaces are produced’ (2007: 152).

Negotiation of insider and outsider space is not always a struggle. It can involve accepting an invitation to share space, although important in this is acknowledgement of one’s own outsidership and the implications that it has on participation. One holiday homeowner in Padstow described acting according to a self-reflective awareness of their positionality both on the day and as linked to the broader socio-cultural dynamics:

We always try and stay on the periphery and not get too close, because it’s such a special day for the people, and whilst it does attract a lot of visitors I think you have to be mindful of the importance of it, because it goes back hundreds of years.

(K13)

However, gauging one’s place in these dynamics and how they link to desirable behaviour can be hard to judge (see Hodsdon, Ozoliņa & Zijlstra, this volume), as one of us described in our field notes from the Livonian Festival:

I heard singing and stepped behind some stalls to find Livonian people dancing in a circle. Onlookers, especially children, were being urged to join in by gesturing arms. I really wanted to join in too: but was it culturally appropriate? I was grabbed by a couple of dancers who broke the circle to pull me in. Holding hands we laughed as I tried to pick up the steps from them. Allowed to participate I experienced, through my body, this threatened culture’s liveness.

(Field notes)

Sometimes such decisions are more actively required. When the Serpent Dance moves through the street at Golowan, one has two choices to make: to get out of the way of the long snake of linked dancing people, or ‘grab someone’s hand and hold on’ (K82). Some onlookers fail to make either of these choices, potentially resulting in being literally pushed out of the way:

Some years when I’ve done the Serpent Dance, there’s some person standing in the middle of the road with a camera and it’s like, duh, there’s 500 people running towards you: get out of the way. I’ve had people sat in the middle of the road with the Serpent Dance coming right for them. I’ve gone, “time to move” and they’ve said “we’re not moving” and it’s like, well you’re going to get trampled on. I did make a point of trampling on them.

(K82)

Similarly, a Mayer describes being able to ‘walk in a straight line through a crowd and know that everyone will move out of the way [...] I’m just going to walk through you otherwise, which people aren’t used to’ (K85). Crowded small spaces and the more or less conscious taking over of the spatial landscape can cause tension and dominant, even aggressive, body language and forceful interactions that are not normally acceptable. Bodies in space can thus reflect the agency and empowerment represented, albeit temporarily, by the event taking over the town.

### **Spatial negotiations**

Space, then, plays an important role in the performance of these ICH events. Its significance for insiders can be profound in the context of the everyday spatial tensions that are a feature of the socio-cultural landscape in Cornwall. Here, the carnivalesque opportunity to subvert norms for the duration of the event provides the impetus for insiders to physically take up space in their town and thus feel empowered, even if only temporarily. It also provides a space to make a distinctive intangible culture visible by placing it centre stage for a day. The physical features of the town provide the performance space to shape the event and help it to become indelibly linked with that particular place. In turn, the event is interwoven, literally and figuratively, into the town’s physical and affective fabric and thus works with the familiarity of the town as stage to underline the importance and significance of the day.

And yet, as the potential for space to act as a mechanism of exclusion, as described above, indicates, this act of reclaiming may not be perceived as such by those whom it seemingly has the potential temporarily to disempower. Although the celebration is experienced and navigated by outsiders and insiders in often contrasting and disjointed ways, there are equally varied experiences of connectedness that many people experience in the space where local tradition thrives. The embodiedness of this drawing together can be profound, as one Padstow visitor described their experience of the day as one that ‘wraps in and around you – it wraps all around you’ (K5). And crucially this participation is not necessarily contested

by insiders, who expressed concern over space chiefly when it has the potential physically to stop them performing as they wish – and indeed sometimes stated their openness to any bodies in the space joining in the performance of it:

.... you get a lot of people with flowers in their hair and stuff, and I don't really mind them, as long as they join in; it's when they just sit on the pavements and get in the way, then that's a bit annoying. On the whole, if you join in, then why not.

(K88)

Likewise, a Golowan insider talked about feeling 'pride that people that don't consider themselves Cornish are doing Cornish stuff', explaining that this was important because it is a means of 'bringing us all together. [...] They are part of the Cornish community then, and that that's hugely important to me' (K77). Although dress and body language can identify who is an insider participant and who is not, there are few strictly drawn boundaries between insider and outsider other than those quasi-sacred spaces related to the ritual elements of the respective Osses.

These overlapping but not congruent spatial experiences of the same event have the potential to create dissonance between how insiders and outsiders engage with, understand, and experience the event. In part, this results in constant negotiation of what is and should be accessible to whom. Insiders we spoke to were by and large inclined towards inclusion, but at the same time must balance this with the need to enforce their own sense of belonging, by definition excluding others. As they do so, spatial demarcations – between us and them; here and there; in and out – constantly shift. This negotiation can create intermediary positions (such as not quite private/not quite public; not quite in/not quite out) which undermine the very binary they need to establish their identity. So these ambiguities may also simply result in the event being perceived and experienced differently – in content, in movement, in affect – shaped by existing relationships with space, place, and each other. Space, then, is always negotiated – potentially contested, but open to collective construction and potential redrawing of boundaries. Greater awareness of who is in what space, and what their position is within it, is an important element in this negotiation. UNESCO has warned of festival popularity and overcrowding on a global level, and indeed the irony of ICH designation being a threat rather than source of resilience has been noted (e.g. Hafstein 2018). Taylor suggests that to protect ICH worldwide, organisations such as UNESCO must address 'problems of economic and political encroachment or appropriation of cultural practices by others, as well as the loss of the lands, objects, and traditions, and jobs that in turn lead to the migration of the younger generations' (2016: 153). But looking beyond the ICHC might prompt a more holistic response. Such a scenario as Taylor describes is clearly applicable to Cornwall as well as other rural regions where tourism is replacing traditional industries; the resultant broader conditions for resilience that may threaten these place-based practices of ICH are clearly manifest. Examples we have explored in this chapter suggest that conceptions of 'tourists' versus locals, and of an easy distinction between those whose cultural practices they are and

‘others’ is inadequate to conceptualise the way space is inhabited and interacted with at an ICH event, given the prominent and nuanced role that place – and emergent communities of place linked to it – plays in shaping the events and the way that people behave within it. Instead, the opportunities that this plurality presents for resilience and greater majority awareness can also be viewed as positive (Smith & Forest 2006: 139). Events can help connect the people in a place – whether people with historic links to a place, long-term and temporary residents, holiday home-owners, or tourists – simply through sharing and respecting the event and space. The power reversal may be temporary, the festive space may be illusory, and experiences may be incongruent. Ethical participation entails a self-reflectiveness that these events take place in a shared space, but one to which others may have more claim. As such, taking up space becomes a negotiation in which performance rather than identity becomes key. Insider–outsider relations become not so much about *where* one should be, or where one can go, but *how*.

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# Negotiations



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# 10 Rules of engagement at intangible cultural heritage events

*Laura Hodsdon, Lolita Ozoliņa,  
and Antine Zijlstra*

Closed roads or temporary signage indicate an event is taking place; opportunities to consume and participate by purchasing street food or crafts take over public space; funfairs and bandstands are filled with audiences; spectators watch floats and bands go by, or performers on stage. These scenarios are readily navigable for those familiar with Western majority norms, not least in identifying who is performer, who is audience, and what the most appropriate way of engaging (or not) might be. But in European minority cultures' intangible cultural heritage (ICH) events, around the edges of these normative practices are sites of ambiguity or negotiation, of micro-moments where relevant behavioural codes are not always available. It is here that the 'rules' of where and how to engage when one's role is *not* clearly navigable are negotiated: where, perhaps, an illusory resemblance to normative behaviour (such as a group of people singing a song) seems to invite a normative response (such as clapping appreciatively), which could turn out to be the 'wrong' one in that particular circumstance (the 'correct' behaviour would have been to sing along). Individuals from one group moving within the space of another could manifest misaligned behavioural codes and expectations of the nature of the relationship. In this chapter we explore performative and participative interactions at ICH events, as actors with varying levels of cultural know-how interact.

## **Navigating intercultural encounters**

Key to this inter-group interaction is *knowing what to do* as an outsider. Many theories and lenses have been applied to intercultural interaction, from Hofstede (2001) to Bhabha (1994), Goffman (1963, 2022) and Bourdieu (1972). For Bourdieu, a habitus derived from different societal fields results in practices that are 'immediately intelligible and foreseeable' to individuals within that habitus (Bourdieu [1972] 2008: 80). Familiarity with the habitus 'presupposes [...] mastery of a common code' (Bourdieu [1972] 2008: 81); the micro-level behavioural repertoire as explored by Goffman, who 'determined that all interactions are underpinned by unstated patterns in communication, i.e. rules of engagement, that are based on shared codes of behaviour' (Collett 2007: 2). These patterns are constantly at play within a habitus, but 'in intercultural contexts participants have differing understandings of these rules of engagement leading to differing interpretations of communicative behaviours' (Collett 2007: 2).

For those operating with different cultural understandings, while these common codes may overlap due to other shared cultural contexts or hybrid identities, contexts where the habitus could contain unfamiliar practices offer potential for misalignment. In everyday interactions between groups, Putnam's (1995) conception of social capital as providing bonding and bridging potential between communities has provided ways to think about newcomers' engagement (e.g. Gieling, Vermeij & Haartsen 2017); and Savage (2014) and others (cf. Haartsen & Stockdale 2018) have considered the negotiations of newcomers as a process of 'elective belonging'. Elective belonging 'pitches choice against history, as the migrant consumer rubs up against dwellers with historical attachments to place' (Savage 2014: 30) and as such draws out the inherently differing positionalities of insiders and outsiders, and their implicit codes of micro-behaviour along with them.

As such, implications of this increased mobility relate to newcomers' 'cultural competence' (e.g. Cloke, Goodwin & Milbourne 1998) to navigate between contexts successfully, important in fostering positive inter-group relations. Cresswell considers the potential for contestation when one group is in a space that is not seen as 'for them' (Cresswell 1996). As he notes, micro-behaviours are spatially as well as interpersonally shaped: 'When we are silent in the library or kneeling in the church we are "reading" the place', a practice which is 'informed by the always already existing meanings of the place' that indicate 'what is the appropriate thing to do' (Cresswell 1996: 16). This ability to 'read the room' is important since the habitus 'attempts to get away from the idea of formal rules and toward strategies. People in their actions simply act as they think they are supposed to' (Cresswell 1996: 156). But as Meissner describes, even when actors 'realize that their attitudes and behavior are inappropriate in an altered environment, it is not easily possible for them to adapt': since 'the habitus is "a product of history", it "ensures the active presence of past experiences" (Bourdieu 1990 [1980]: 54), and so actors still behave and think in ways which were appropriate in the "original" situation in which their habitus was formed' (Meissner 2018: 238). Meissner's discussion relates to intergenerational perspectives on ICH, but these observations are readily applicable to outsiders' interactions, too; and it is clear how they relate to more temporally and spatially delimited moments of encounter. Edensor has considered spatial and social 'rules' in the context of tourism, arguing that tourists seek the everyday rather than the exotic, and as such when they 'enter particular stages, they are usually informed by pre-existing discursive, practical, embodied norms which help to guide their performative orientations and achieve a working consensus about what to do' (Edensor 2007: 202). Elsewhere in tourism studies, there have been attempts to produce guidelines for visitors in situations of intercultural encounter (Cole 2007; Liljeblad 2015); these have tended to focus on Western visitors to the Global South (e.g. Crang 2015), where the politics of difference is likely to be more stark. There have also been applications of notions of habitus and social capital to ICH (e.g. Arcodia & Whitford 2006; Brownnett 2018; Drápala 2020; Finkel 2010; Meissner 2018), which tend to draw out distinctiveness at an intra-group level, but has not explicitly interrogated the porousness, or not, of the habitus in relation to outsiders who may interact with it in subtle or substantive ways.

Those encountering an ICH practice for the first time will draw upon their own discursive and embodied norms and assumptions. These may be, but are not always, the result of an open reflexivity towards the ICH and those that practise it. An outsider's positionality is likely to be underpinned by various narratives that exaggerate differences or erase them (Hodsdon & Moenandar, this volume). (In this chapter as elsewhere in this book, we use 'insider' and 'outsider' as relative terms sitting on a spectrum, and in using the terms to imply two distinct groups we do not suggest that everyone present can be clearly designated as one or the other [although some can] – see Hodsdon, this volume.) As Bhabha describes it, the 'terms of cultural engagement, whether antagonistic or affiliative, are produced performatively' (Bhabha 1994: 3). And indeed, the corollary of getting it 'right' within a habitus is that the very act of being 'deviant from group rules' might be what creates and cements one's outsider status (Becker 1963). So whether conceived of as bodies in and/or out of place (or both simultaneously), nostalgic or elective belonging, or outsiders seeking to act within an unfamiliar habitus, in the encounter with minority culture is the potential for negotiation at the level of behaviour, at specific moments in time. In this chapter, we focus on these behavioural performances at the intersection of familiar insiders and unfamiliar outsiders in the ICH practice, reflecting on some of the sorts of encounters described elsewhere in this volume in space (Frears & Hodsdon) and in language and identity (Zijlstra, Aardema & Moenandar) to consider more explicitly the sociological, day-to-day interactions in the context of inter-group contact and individuals navigating their way through these encounters.

### ***Why intercultural encounters might matter***

Cultural *faux pas* seem perhaps to be inevitable. One individual at Padstow May Day in Cornwall, who was not an insider but had connections within Padstow, considered that behavioural transgression did happen within a clearly defined behavioural code, which is 'strict: there are rules' which are policed by insiders, since 'you'll be told otherwise, if you step over the mark' (K8). A Padstow insider (K88) felt that normative cultural codes – those of a shared habitus – should guide the behaviour of those unfamiliar with May Day, where 'You read the room, and you take your social cues and as long as you can read what's going on, you gradually get a bit braver'. They point out that this is true in any intercultural encounter, since 'it's like that anywhere really, not just us', and the consequence is minor, as 'if you overstep the mark, someone will tell you'. For those with cultural and social capital in the minority heritage context, ramifications may indeed be inconsequential. But even in a small interaction, there is a social advantage to adhering to the rules: both the momentary 'direct profit derived from doing what the rule prescribes' but also 'secondary benefits such as [...] prestige and respect' (Bourdieu [1972] 2008: 22). So what of those with no such social currency to spend? For a newcomer seeking to integrate within a place longer term, erosion of social capital could have deeper consequences. Insiders may reinforce practical or discursive boundaries, and the newcomer may self-police and withdraw to avoid further erosion of social capital,

or to avoid embarrassment. Even trivial incidents are potential fodder for ‘us and them’ narratives. Inter-group contact theory (Allport 1954) posits that a negative experience with a member of another group ‘is often mobilized to produce and justify powerful negative generalizations about the whole population that the minority individual is seen to represent’ (Valentine 2008: 332). And crucially, intergroup contact theory suggests that

Positive encounters with individuals from minority groups do not necessarily change people’s opinions about groups as a whole for the better with the same speed and permanence as negative encounters. In other words, in the context of negative encounters minority individuals are perceived to represent members of a wider social group, but in positive encounters minority individuals tend to be read only as individuals.

(Valentine 2008: 332)

As Hall & Pretty (2008) describe, for example, in the context of contested land between farmers and newcomers, even minor transgressions ‘reduced trust and increased feelings of suspicion towards non-farmers’, with the effect that ‘narratives of the public’s poor behaviour [...] further eroded feelings of goodwill’ (Hall & Pretty 2008: 4). The importance of inter-group context, although downplayed by the Padstow interviewee above, thus raises the stakes for seemingly trivial moments to impact narratives, perspectives, and understandings between majority and minority actors within the ecosystem. Are outsiders entering an unfamiliar habitus, with the commensurate need to ‘learn the rules’? Or is this an everyday encounter on which one can rely on one’s existing socio-cultural capital? How do outsiders know which situation they are in, and what is expected of them if they are to be an ethical social actor? In the next section we consider how outsiders negotiate how to ‘get involved’ in our case study contexts.

### **Outsider participation at events in Cornwall, Frisia, and the Livonian Coast**

In this chapter we consider live cultural events from Cornwall, Frisia, and Latvia, all of which contain, to varying extents, both normative and more local or esoteric elements (see Appendix 1). The Livonian Festival has taken place in the village of Mazirbe on the Livonian Coast since 1989. As well as exhibitions, discussions, and book presentations, there is a market selling handicrafts and traditional Livonian foods such as carrot pies (*sūr kak*) and smoked fish; there is also a procession to the shore to offer a garland to the Sea Mother, an important figure in Livonian mythology, and a bonfire on the beach, both accompanied by songs in Livonian. *Iepenloftspul* (*Open air theatre*) Jorwert’s first production, *The Bells of Jorwert*, was organised to raise money for new bells for the village church; over the years the company has grown and become more professional, and the performance repertoire changed to adaptations of well-known books and films, becoming a household name in the region and beyond. In Cornwall, Golowan in Penzance

and May Day in Padstow are local events both linked to the solar calendar, whether an unbroken tradition (Padstow) or revived (Penzance), with elements reflecting a pre-globalised, more esoteric context sitting alongside funfairs, food, and craft stalls.

### *Insider and outsider bodies*

Negotiations at the edges of the events can take place fairly literally at a spatial level, reflecting a social jostling for space particularly characteristic of touristic locations in these marginal rural regions, explored in depth by Frears and Hodsdon (this volume). In part, this reflects the increased volume of people in public space – as one Golowan attendee was aware: ‘I don’t want to be one of those extra bodies that’s getting in the way’ (K80). Some holiday homeowners at May Day were aware of their outsidership (as well as the contestedness of their presence in this space, beset by a housing crisis driven in no small part by temporary residents and tourism) and acted accordingly, so ‘we always try and stay on the periphery and not get too close’ (K13). But signals of when to ‘stay on the periphery’ are not always clear. At Golowan, the Serpent Dance is a participatory dance that (conga-like) collects additional bodies as it winds through the streets of Penzance. Here, the implications of not getting it right – of *not* taking part when the dance approaches – are potentially dangerous. In an interaction that Frears and Hodsdon discuss in more detail elsewhere in this volume, insiders performing the Serpent Dance can be unforgiving towards bodies in the way that risk being ‘trampled on’ (K81), and need to be told to move aside. Working out where to put one’s body has potential physical as well as social consequences.

Similarly, at the Livonian Festival, dancers in traditional costumes to the side of the main stage join hands in a large circle to perform a Latvian folk dance. The dance is recognisable to Latvians, Livonian or not, and so a shared habitus between majority and minority cultures indicates how and when to join in. But for non-Latvian attendees, the rules of this habitus are not available. Our field notes show that one of the UK research team attending the Festival joined in the circle, whereas another observed ‘I feel like I’m gawping, so stand a distance away to watch. I’m still feeling embarrassed that I was possibly intruding, when my colleague bounds up breathlessly and says “I joined in the dance!”’ (Field notes). Different interpretations of the ‘right’ thing to do (based too, of course, on different personal characteristics) led to opposite behaviours. Later, participants process to the seashore, following a leader with the Livonian flag and a choir in traditional costume. For those without previous festival experience, it is unknown where the procession will head; but the gathering of people clearly designates the procession as the ‘next thing’ on the programme rather than a performance to be gazed upon. Indeed, ‘going with the flow’ and becoming a passive part of communal proceedings may in itself be an attractive aspect of the event, even without previous knowledge or information. In Padstow, these ‘rules’ do not apply. Finding oneself in the path of the oncoming procession, one should, as in Penzance, move aside – but the invitation to join in is far from clear-cut. Padstow insiders we spoke to indicate that this

‘grammar of exclusion’ (Eriksen 2015; see Moenandar, Moran-Nae & Hodsdon, this volume) is chiefly practical, since ‘You keep getting the band separated from the Oss, which is really frustrating, because then the singers can’t hear the music because a lot of people have come in between’ (K88).

The ‘rules’, then, are event-contingent: as one Cornish stakeholder put it, ‘if you don’t do the Serpent Dance, you get in the way. There are other times, when throwing yourself into it is the wrong thing to do’ (K91). In terms of embodied behaviours, although the processional format that forms a core part of both Livonian and Cornish events seems to inscribe clear roles, the know-how and capital that may be gained from getting it right at one event cannot necessarily be transferred to another.

### *Visible outsider performances*

A key means to co-ordinate the performance of insiderness is through costume, signalling licence to participate and perform (see Michael (1998) for costume as shibboleth). This has implications should outsiders attempt to literally put on that identity for the day, or to introduce other semantically loaded dress. Two visitors to May Day had seen Padstonians wearing traditional all-white with a red or blue bandana: one felt that they had misunderstood the ‘rules’ as ‘I’m not wearing white’; while another thought that their red and blue jumper could mean that ‘people won’t know if I’m on their team or not’. The interviewer’s explanation that only Padstonians wear white only compounded the sense of cultural misalignment: ‘I’m so confused by this whole thing, I’ve no idea what’s going on [laughs]’ (K28, K29). This failure to identify a deliberate mechanism by which their outsidership is constructed and reinforced points to the onus on outsiders to determine appropriate participation. Nevertheless, stallholders in town selling hats and sunglasses also stocked bandanas – in red, blue, and other colours – the commercial setting implying an invitation for anyone to purchase and perform insiderness. One Padstonian insider felt that this was for the outsider to self-police on the basis of their ethical stance, suggesting that if someone wants to ‘pretend to be local that’s on their conscience really’ (K86). Bandana-wearing but non-white-wearing attendees tread an ambiguous visual line between liminal insiderness and appropriative outsidership.

On other occasions, clothing may be less linked to identity, but nevertheless inadvertently signal outsidership. One Frisian respondent said that they could identify an outsider because they turned up to an outdoor theatre event in summer clothes rather than with a coat and blanket (F76). And an insider from Penzance felt the town’s seasonal festivals were ‘anarchic’ – literally, free from rule – and described how ‘[At the revived spring festival] May Horns, a pile of dinosaurs turned up’ (K82). But despite the claims for anarchy, costume is nevertheless subject to implicit rules: ‘it was made really clear to them [...] that if they wanted a dinosaur procession they were welcome to sort one out with the Council’. For this respondent, for whom the paganesque elements of Penzance’s events were profoundly meaningful, ‘it’s not an opportunity to just dress up, we’re dressing up to participate in something’. But the implicitness of these rules is stark. When the interviewer points out that ‘people can just turn up dressed up’, the respondent agrees, saying, ‘yeah, they can’.

But, the interviewer concludes, ‘you’re saying not as a dinosaur?’ to which she replies, ‘yeah’. The interviewee assumes that the out-group transgressors are local teenagers, constructing the in-group as those with official, town council-sanctioned authority. Here, outsidership is based on, and policed by, the unwritten rules of those who feel ownership of the event. This uneasy co-existence of anarchy and rules is one in which the *savoir faire* needed to navigate the distinction is gained not from a Cornish, or even Penzancian, identity; but from an insider-organiser’s socio-cultural capital with institutional sanction from the Council. More confusing still, the respondent felt that dinosaurs *would* be welcome at Golowan, the marking of Midsummer – perhaps the non-normative ‘rules’ are implicit and emergent even to those who articulate them. For respondents from other regions, the meaning of the event is likewise paramount. One Livonian insider who was clear that ‘the Festival should be open to everyone’ nevertheless expressed the impact of superficial engagement in visceral terms: ‘It hurts me that there are people at the Livonian festival who do not understand where they have come to’ (L5). Where ownership of the ICH is profoundly felt, behavioural transgressions based on different or incomplete interpretations of the code can have affective, negative consequences.

#### *‘Invitations’...*

Other times, ‘invitations’ can provide guidance. These might simply indicate whether or not to (know to) turn up. Several tourists at Golowan had no idea that it was taking place and were visiting Penzance by chance; but this is in part deliberate, as an organiser pointed out, ‘we’re very lean on our marketing, because we don’t need to. The cohort that wants to come and participate and engage [...] exists already’ (K92). Similarly, at village events on the Livonian Coast, one organiser ‘doesn’t make a poster and doesn’t invite anyone’ since ‘those who know, come’ (L24). This results in a mixed audience: ‘There are locals [who come]. But also visitors to Kolkasrags who wonder what’s going on!’ (L3). At the Livonian Festival, the fact of free admission is in itself taken to be an invitation and an implicit statement of inclusivity, meaning ‘people just have to come. They are not divided between our own and strangers’ (L4). Another Livonian insider suggests that ‘strangers don’t come here – if they do, it’s through someone they know’ (L39) – the need for an invitation from a friend or family member implying a degree of insidership. Invitations to participate rather than just spectate may also rely on insider connections. One Penzance-born member of the Golowan Band (K83), a folk ensemble that plays throughout the event and others in Penzance, recounted how their desire for band membership was initially stymied by a lack of know-how: ‘I was like “how can I do this?” I didn’t know how to join’. But as a friend of the band leader, they asked and were told ‘just turn up to the practices, and play the tunes and practise the processing bit’. They ‘had discovered folk music’ at university, so possessed the cultural capital of being able to play an instrument and knowledge of folk music conventions. Participation, therefore, while explicitly open, in this instance relied on significant existing social and cultural capital. Likewise, a Frisian respondent claims that while everybody should be able to participate in theatre

productions, nevertheless Dutch-speaking actors should fit the play and the character, and ‘certain skills are necessary (singing, acting, (learning to) speak the Frisian language etc.)’ (F46). This limit to participation linked to cultural competence from elsewhere in the cultural field has been noted in other forms of ICH (e.g. Oras & Powell 2022). Participation is explicitly open, but implicitly limited.

Other invitations are subtler (and might be described as ‘inclusion shibboleths’, to use Michael’s (1998) term). At May Day, a Padstonian wearing white holding a collection tin was giving out printed leaflets containing the words to the song that accompanies the procession, including bold-typed choruses, an instruction to join in familiar at least to anyone who has attended a Christian church service. By accepting this ‘invitation’ and singing along with the insiders, an outsider’s behavioural engagement can shift from spectator to performer. And yet, despite this clear signal of the rules, one of the research team observed that ‘it never actually occurs to me to join in’ (Field notes). This may partly be explained by being alone in contrast to the communal nature of the song; but such *self*-construction of outsidership may risk perpetuating a narrative that visitors are unwelcome, potentially exacerbating any division between groups. So when a songsheet formatted in precisely the same manner was given out at the Livonian Festival for the hymn *My Fatherland* (*Min Izāmō*) in Livonian, the same person wrote in their field notes:

My first instinct is to not join in – but I remember the flyer with the words to the May Day song and how I *chose* to exclude myself. Deliberately, I join in. Of course I don’t know the tune or how to pronounce the words: but the tune is a standard Western hymn/anthem-style so is easy to pick up.

(Field notes)

As with the Golowan band member above, cultural capital also comes into play: ‘I’ve been in choirs all my life so am confident singing aloud, not concerned that I will be heard’ (Field notes). Inclusion via song sheets is, according to Livonian insiders, a deliberate strategy (and as Ernštreits et al. argue in this volume, a key means that the Livonian language is transmitted): ‘they even give us the lyrics so we can follow along’ (L33); or seen to be a desirable one, as in one Livonian interviewee’s suggestion to ‘involve the public more’ by ‘hand[ing] out the leaflets with the lyrics on them’ (L39).

### ...secrets

Despite widespread inclusive signalling, particularly through music, participation is not infinitely open. Event insiders work in various ways to construct aspects of events that can only be experienced by insiders. Drápala has noted the control of information to this end, and observes,

the awareness of identity and integrity of a particular group and thus [...] the stability of the social structure [...] is reinforced, for example, with the use of

various forms of limited access to essential information and knowledge (for both the community members and outsiders).

(2020: 124)

At Golowan, not all activities are included in the comprehensive-seeming programme distributed in print and online. This may relate to spatial practicalities (as Frears & Hodsdon suggest, this volume); but it is also integral to the performance of the event. One Golowan insider describes the pleasure of ‘happening to be at the right place at the right time, or catching something on the wind and following it’ as ‘an intrinsic part of the spirit of Mazey Day’ (K78). Yet while this spontaneity implies a tourist may be just as likely to be able to participate as an insider, the same interviewee goes on to explain that, although ‘it’s not like somebody’s keeping a secret from anyone’, nevertheless these are things ‘which you’d like to not publicise, so there aren’t tens of thousands of people observing something that is more participatory’ (K78). There is a trace of self-contradiction here, between the desire not to be exclusive and the act of constructing implicit boundaries. As another Golowan insider suggests, ‘you’ve got to know, and you’ve got to be there’ (K81). For those who happen not to know, this lack of information can create the sense they are missing out. One Penzance resident who moved to Cornwall as an adult (K39) expresses the feeling that ‘There’s something good going on that I don’t know about’. While they attribute this to an oversight of programming – ‘I’ve got the programme but it hasn’t quite got the timings for the bands and things’ – as the previous quotation shows, this not only a deliberate act by insiders, but also indicates the complexity of insiderness, where even local residents can feel excluded. This ‘accidental’ exclusivity, an integral and desirable aspect of the event for some, operates for insiders as a mechanism to reinforce their ownership via their own exclusive participation. Finkel describes similar processes at the Up Helly Aa Viking festival on Shetland that ensure certain activities are for insiders while stopping just short of explicitly saying so. Attendees at after-parties ‘are all invited guests’, so ‘very few non-community members can attend them without a strong local connection’ (Finkel 2010: 280). And at the celidh there is no caller (Finkel 2010), meaning those who are there must explicitly rely on their cultural capital to determine whether they may take part or must watch from the sidelines. These practices contrast with the town council-run International Mining and Pasty Festival in Redruth, Cornwall. In a town whose fortunes have downturned sharply since its height as a mining centre in the 19th century, the event’s outward-facing purpose to revise narratives about the town (K89, K90) leads to a comprehensive openness designed at making as visible and accessible an event as possible. One of the organisers felt that because it is a ‘new tradition’, there is ‘less likelihood that there will be things that are hidden away that people don’t know about’ (K89, K90). The implicit, somewhat organic mechanisms that create a grammar of exclusion are seemingly interlinked with the non-institutionalised, embedded practices that constitute the shaping and maintaining of ICH ownership.

**Language**

Language can also be a way for outsiders to negotiate participation performatively: but again, risks to erosion of social capital abound. One Livonian respondent frames language performance as an explicitly ethical issue, wondering whether ‘it would be useful to think about the code of ethics of the Livonian Republic’ and considering what such a code might contain. They suggest ‘When you are on the Livonian coast and you meet people, you should say hello, preferably in Livonian’ (L3). This gesture is not communicative but performative. As such, poor performances are subject to gatekeeping such that some people may be ‘afraid to say hello the wrong way’ (L1). This fear was also voiced by Frisian and Cornish respondents, one relating a friend learning Frisian who worries that ‘if she makes a mistake people might laugh’ (F46). One Dutch respondent living on the Livonian Coast felt an ethical need to connect with Livonian culture, ‘You have to know the history of the place to live there’, but was less clear that this extended to language, since ‘It would be a bit strange if we started speaking in Livonian’ (L54). This reticence is not, as might be expected, related to the ethics of learning a language that is primarily symbolic, as being potentially appropriation rather than communication, since this same Dutch respondent felt that the ethical situation would be similar if they had moved within the Netherlands to Frisia, where Frisian is spoken in everyday communication: ‘You shouldn’t pretend to be Frisian and try to speak their language’ (L54). And yet, many Frisian respondents were clear that this *is* precisely what they would expect. One respondent felt that Dutch people who moved to Frisia should ‘do a mandatory course’ (F15), and another that people ‘should at least try to understand it’ (F31). This applies to participation in theatre events no less than integration into Frisian society in general (explored in detail by Zijlstra, Aardema & Moenandar, this volume), and some respondents are clear that this comprises an explicit exclusion criterion for outsider attendance: ‘The performance is meant for people who understand Frisian. Dutch visitors know the performance is in Frisian and (usually) will be able to follow along. If they can’t, they shouldn’t come’ (F98). And while there was some gatekeeping from insiders disapproving of those who get the language wrong, these were generally outweighed by those who appreciated the effort (see O’Rourke & DePalma 2017), such as one Frisian relating a Dutch incomer acting in a play, commending the fact he performed in Frisian as being ‘very brave’, not least since he ‘had to say “pjutteboartersplak”’ – the audience *did* seemingly laugh as the learner above feared, but this interviewee felt they ‘found that hilarious because it was so difficult to say’ but in an appreciative way, ‘But he did it and it was amazing’ (F41). It seems that there is as much self-policing by outsiders through fear of ‘getting it wrong’ as there is gatekeeping by insiders. Either way, the potential benefits to social capital (and for potential to be involved in ICH) of taking the risk are clear: ‘A colleague of mine is [...] now living in a Frisian village, and he started talking [Frisian] as well, and he now joins everything, the sports, the parades, volunteer work. Then you are in the community’ (F103).

### **Discussion: the ‘rules of engagement’**

One year, a confused motorist who tried to force his car through the crowd at Golowan

...didn't feel like he was part of the community, but through his own ignorant choice decided that him driving somewhere through a town full of people celebrating something was more [important]. I just thought it's a real shame: if he'd just switch his engine off, sat on his bonnet, and watched the fireworks he would have had a much more enjoyable time [...] What I like about Penzance – and I have experienced this in other places as well – is when people just go, “No. Different rules of engagement. This isn't a road for you to drive through, and we're not going to get out the way. This is a community, having a firework display to celebrate Mazey Eve, and you can wait” [laughs].

(K78)

As this chapter has shown, knowing these ‘different rules of engagement’ is not always as simple as relying on normative Western cultural capital (since the rules may be older, or derived from elsewhere), nor looking them up (since they are almost always implicit). Indeed, we found very few examples of explicit rules relating to ICH; those that existed mainly related to planning rules for building development. Yet, while the space afforded by the implicit and so more fluid, emergent articulation of how to behave has the potential to limit and exclude, it also opens the potential to negotiate and include. As one Livonian insider put it, ‘if someone drives in from the outside, they have to accept the rules of this place [...] the protection of the cultural space comes down to the fact that the rules must be respected’ (L2). Our analysis shows that these negotiations of how to get it ‘right’ take place in different domains, from the discursive – whether and when to learn and speak up in the minority language, and how to interpret often-implicit invitations to include or exclude oneself; to the more embodied – through dress, and through taking part (or not) in processions and other ritual activities.

It seems, as one Cornwall stakeholder put it, that ‘there are gauche things that can happen, when you don't know the rules’ (K91). So for an individual encountering ICH that is not theirs, there is a certain element of risk. Self-constructed outsiderhood, as in the examples above, can lead to a reticence to participate, particularly when fuelled by divisive narratives or stereotypes. Some tourists visiting Padstow on May Day (K28, K29) admitted, ‘I'll be honest, there were mixed views [on] whether we should venture over here or not’, explaining, ‘One of our party thought it was all a bit too aggressive and decided to stay at home’. However, in the end their experience contradicted this assumption and they felt instead that ‘it's really friendly, really really friendly - I don't know where they got that from’. The negative narrative leads to ambiguity about whether May Day is somewhere they would be in place or out of place (Cresswell 1996). Although the relative exclusivity of

May Day does mean that there is less space for outsiders to negotiate participation than in Golowan, for example, the policing and self-policing of micro-moments of behaviour over time has become entrenched as a narrative of uncertain origin ('I don't know where they got that from') that is here directly overcome via positive inter-group contact.

There may also be discomfort that must be endured before sufficient *savoir faire* in the habitus is achieved. One Livonian newcomer to the Livonian Festival (L5) initially felt excluded: 'at the beginning when I went to the Festival, I didn't feel invited: it seemed that everyone knew each other'. But following the accumulation of social capital, 'that has changed over the years – the Livonian festival is when it feels like it's the Livonians in full bloom!'. One Frisian respondent felt that 'Everyone's welcome, but you do have to put in some effort. But when you go through town everyone greets you' (F114). Perhaps most risky of all is the potential for being told, perhaps publicly, and perhaps not pleasantly, that you have over-stepped the mark. A respondent on the Livonian Coast who is not Livonian felt that if 'there's an event, party, you come from somewhere else and you feel like you have been hit with a paddle on the head' as 'they don't accept anyone from somewhere else' (L62). Sitting with the discomfort of having transgressed a behavioural rule is perhaps an integral part of learning to encounter unfamiliar ICH practice appropriately; a discomfort that does not come easily to many, particularly those who carry privilege into such encounters (see Ginoza, Te Maro & Tweed, this volume). Although some situations pose a risk to capital or public 'face', on other occasions where an ICH practice does have potential for outsider involvement at both event and community level, this could potentially be a source of resilience for the minority culture. Livonian Festival organisers actively look to involve new participants, simply to engender sufficient participation for a practice to exist. Describing one village event at which 'Most of the people who turned up weren't locals', even though the organisers had 'called everybody', one respondent concluded this is because local people simply are 'not interested' in Livonian culture (L24). Another (L4) describes a demand for events that comes 'not from the Livonians themselves, but from the people who live next to them or have come to this environment', underlining the importance of outsider allyship in providing the resource, energy, and ownership required: 'The Livonians are maybe tired of carrying the burden' so that the resulting critical mass can then act as a catalyst for further interest and involvement. Likewise, a Frisian respondent pointed to the fact that 'The village is shrinking, the primary school is gone, so new villagers are very welcome' and advocated focusing on community life rather than identity: 'It doesn't matter where they come from, as long as they participate in village activities' (F88). For many, this inclusiveness – at the explicit level at least – is paramount: 'anyone who comes along and wants to join in and be part of it should be part of it' (K36).

As Relph has described, 'behavioural insideness' consists of being in a place and seeing it as a set of objects, views, and activities arranged in certain ways and having certain observable qualities, and which is closely linked to an existential insideness (Relph 1976: 53). Progress towards an increasingly insider position is not without ethical implications: as Savage argues, in relation to considerations of 'sustainable communities and social cohesion, it is important to be clear about

the different kinds of social ethics' between claims from outsiders whose elective belonging may be 'relatively unimportant for them to belong to a socially cohesive neighborhood' as opposed to those whose place-attachment is formed via historical dwelling and nostalgia (2014: 50). Indeed, as Massey describes and as our data show, places inherently pose 'the question of our living together' in 'an ever-shifting constellation of trajectories' that is political and which 'keeps always under scrutiny the play of the social relationships which construct them' (2005: 153). The reality, however, is that for newcomers or outsiders seeking to reconcile their own habitus with that which they encounter in a place, reflective awareness of that difference is a key pathway to good social relations in an ICH context: 'One of the fundamental effects of the orchestration of habitus is [...] the harmonisation of agents' experiences and the continuous reinforcement that each of them receives from the expression, individual or collective (in festivals, for example)' (Bourdieu 1972: 80). In the context of ICH events, this means seeking ways to self-reflectively navigate the implicit codes of conduct specific to each event (i.e. on using one's ability to be 'heritage literate' (see Hodsdon, Ernštreits, Moenandar & Korenik, this volume)). Despite the semblance of normativity, the presence of esoteric or local elements in ICH events often means that outsiders wishing to behave appropriately must self-discover affective, symbolic, or embodied signals to determine whether to get involved or not, and how to behave in this ambiguous context. The stakes, as we suggested at the outset of this chapter, may be small in each interaction, but cumulatively are not necessarily trivial. Overcoming over-zealous self-policing may be key to outsider contribution to a more resilient ICH; while self-reflective behaviour leading to positive inter-group contact could play a role in supporting good social relations between majority and minority groups. Majority individuals who seek to act appropriately in this context should remain poised to seek signals for their participation (or non-participation); to reflect on their positionality in an unfamiliar cultural space and act (or not) accordingly; and be prepared to be told when they are getting it wrong.

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# 11 The filmmakers' gaze

## Navigating the zone of cultural osmosis in capturing heritage events

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### **Echoes of ancient voices: 'Oss Oss Wee Oss!'**

Padstow May Day is a centuries-old tradition in which people play drums and accordions and sing while processing through the town's streets behind large, costumed 'Osses' (see Appendix 1 for detail). One of the earliest visual representations of May Day is an etching from around 1830 (see Figure 11.1). It shows a central figure wearing a large, black Oss costume, surrounded by a 'teaser' (who dances with the Oss), musicians, and a maypole. Fast-forward two centuries through celluloid newsreels projected in cinemas, evolving into live broadcast television beamed into homes, latterly exploded into the digital sphere of portable screen devices and social media, and the features of the event are still clearly recognisable from those depicted in this early etching. Each artefact perpetuates public curiosity, bringing ever greater numbers of spectating tourists, shifting the insider—outsider, or participant—audience, balance with a touristic gaze (Urry 1990), with which, as we explore in this chapter, audio-visual (AV) archive forms an increasingly reflexive discourse. The plurality of perspectives through which these artefacts have been (and continue to be) created and disseminated presents an opportunity for analysing AV archives' impacts across the changing social and technological contexts of the last two centuries. To explore these, we compiled a database of AV artefacts capturing Cornish cultural events, including May Day, from local, regional, and national archives; university collections, museums and folkloric societies; and families and private collectors. These make up over 200 entries – many thousands of AV artefacts – with varying degrees of accessibility: some, but not all, catalogued; fewer still digitised. Collating these fragmented and dispersed artefacts allows us to step back and consider the archive as a whole.

There is an extensive literature relating to intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and film, pertaining to ethics, copyright, and accessibility (e.g. Brunow 2017; Viken 2017; Erlewein 2015; Sherman 2008), implications of the increasing diversity of AV on archives and museums (e.g. Monova-Zheleva et al. 2020), and on proactive use of media to capture and share ICH (e.g. Lu et al. 2019; Skublewska-Paszowska et al. 2022). Concerning the latter, UNESCO is clear that documenting ICH for preservation is not a valid means of safeguarding, whereas sharing and engaging with that documentation is (Curtis & Proschan 2009). This perspective,



Figure 11.1 Engraving of ‘Padstow Hobby Horse’.

that embeds AV content on ICH within the society that practises it, provides an ideal standpoint to consider the interplay between insiders and outsiders from the perspective of filmic content and production. The power dynamics of filmmaking in an indigenous context – whether driven by ethnographic or artistic inquiry (or of course a combination) – has been discussed (Ginsburg 1991, 2018, 1994; Henley 2020; Wortham 2013). Stemming from the advent of more portable, accessible filmmaking equipment in the 1960s and 1970s, much of this literature concerns the shift in technology and ethical positioning enabling indigenous people, who had traditionally been subjects of the outsider gaze, to instead become authors of their own stories. In this chapter – two of whose authors are professional filmmakers – we draw on this work that considers the mediation, dynamics and ethics via film between insiders and outsiders in minority cultural contexts, and our own expertise and experiences, to consider the positionalities at play in both content and context in the creation and curation of ICH AV artefacts.

### *A triptych gaze*

The ubiquity of the tourist gaze upon May Day makes the notion of ‘gaze’ particularly germane in this context. The tourist gaze is ‘constructed through difference’ and ‘the contrasts implied with non-tourist social practices’ (Urry 1990: 1–2) – resulting in a potentially ‘othering’, minoritising narrative (see Hodsdon & Moenandar; and Koreinik & Hodsdon, this volume). In an AV context, though, we might draw more closely on another framing of the gaze more explicitly positioned in relation to film. First published in *Screen* in 1975, Mulvey described film’s ‘male

gaze', in which 'pre-existing patterns of fascination' are already at work within the filmmaking process, constructing 'woman as image', and man as 'bearer of the look of the spectator'. Mulvey suggested that

there are three different looks associated with cinema: that of the camera as it records the pro-filmic event, that of the audience as it watches the final product, and that of the characters at each other within the screen illusion.

(Mulvey 1975: 17)

We use this tripartite typology of 'looks' to adapt Mulvey's application of the gaze here as a 'filmmakers' gaze' comprising filmmaker, audience, and subject, replacing the male—female dichotomy and its power relations (Mulvey 1975: 11) with those of majority/outsider—minority/insider.

The primary *filmmaker* gaze refers to the act of making: selecting who and what to (and not to) film. It is used broadly here for the observer as filmmaker, photographer or sound recordist (including commissioning and editorial frameworks); the intention and editorial focus, which subjects, ideas or people are given greater or lesser weight (time or freedom to speak in their own voice, or a scripted or edited version of this) fashioned through a series of aesthetic choices. As creator, the filmmaker holds a position of power to direct the audience gaze and decides (consciously or not) whether or to what extent to engender empathy for their subject. The secondary gaze, a viewing *audience*, is (at least in theory) available to all and so encompasses both insider and outsider perspectives. An insider may view the material as nostalgia, a memory resource legitimising repetition; an outsider might view the same as a curiosity, of academic, cultural, or social interest, but removed from their own experience. Responses might of course oscillate between or span this dichotomy. Factors such as who holds the material, in what format(s), where and within what licensing or sharing context, filter the degree of accessibility, clearly impacting who can be an audience at all. The tertiary *subject* gaze describes any protagonist or 'character' within the film, and is the perspective on themselves and each other that they take on its content and action.

Bearing in mind the social contexts and power relations in which May Day takes place, then, we use this triptych to ask: what are the impacts of the relativity of the observer to the audience to the subject, and what impact if any might this interplay have on the ICH being gazed upon? In the sections below, we consider these dynamics to explore the complexities of identity and positionality in the filmmaking process.

### **The filmmakers' gaze: a dominant outsider view**

The relationship between the archive and the ICH it captures is imbricated with power dynamics. As Erlewein asks, 'Who is involved in the production, consumption and regulation of representations and thereby also the (re)construction of ICH?' (Erlewein 2015: 26). Our database shows the ways that this primary observer's gaze evolves over time. Some of the earliest Pathé silent newsreel artefacts of May

Day – *Summer is Y... Comen in* (1930), and the first instance with sync sound *The Padstow Hobby Hoss* (1932) – demonstrate how, through framing and cataloguing choices, May Day footage has been editorialised from an outsider, othering gaze. These films ‘signal the Cornish strongly as “weird rural folk” (and are often catalogued by Pathé as “entertainment and humour” as well as “culture and lifestyle”)', intimating Cornwall’s ‘otherness’ (Moseley 2018: 117; see also Hodsdon & Moenandar, this volume), and Pathé’s editorial line follows a ‘clear observation of a regional curiosity’ (Moseley 2018). The camera position in these early newsreel films is typically detached, filming from a removed, higher perspective. Both films are introduced by a written title card with romanticised text, such as: ‘whose origin is buried in oblivion & has been held from time immemorial’ (British Pathé 1932: 01:23:54) and ‘some say, dates back to Pagan days!’ (British Pathé 1930: 01:39:07).

Lomax later echoes this rhetoric in his introduction to *Oss Oss Wee Oss* as ‘a sexy, savage, springtime rite’ (1953: 00:02:40). Despite this othering description, though, Lomax’s positionality is more complex. *Oss Oss Wee Oss* was pioneering in its conversational narrative approach and form, pre-dating the participatory filmmaking movement of the 1970s and 1980s. While authored by an outsider, who created a fictional ‘Londoner’ voiceover character to interrogate the local accordion-playing fisherman and narrator Charlie Bate, this innovative filmmaking device engages the audience on a journey of discovery to experience the world of the film in a deeper way than would have been possible using the typical reportage approach of the time. Continuing this more participative, sympathetic outsider approach, since the 1960s folklorist Doc Rowe has been recording May Day and illustrates the complex, yet mutable, relationship between a filmmaker and an ICH community. He acknowledges both his outsidership – ‘For years, I had butterflies in the stomach. I’ve had feelings of anxiety, that I really shouldn’t be there because I’m not Padstow, I’m not local’ while at the same time expressing a deeply felt insidership: ‘And yet the overwhelming feeling is that I’ve got to be there, unthinkable not to be. So, I’m there’ (Taylor 2008: 06:50) (elsewhere in this volume Moenandar, Moran-Nae & Hodsdon discuss this combination of boundary experiences as an oscillation between a heart-felt sense of belonging and the need for strict boundary maintenance). Eventually, from sharing his prints of rescued old photographs with locals at the Golden Lion pub in Padstow, to their familiarity with his recording the event over years, Rowe shifted his self-perceived imposition to acceptance:

... someone came up and said, “Doc, when are you starting filming?” And I thought, “Brilliant, that’s how it should be. Remember this”. Because we’d been filming since about 9 o’clock that morning and no one had noticed. And that’s what should be happening, so I was really pleased with that.

(Lines 2017 np.)

***Positionality is paramount: It’s not who you are but how you are***

As the examples of Lomax and Rowe suggest, opportunities to reflect on and construct one’s own positionality are part of insider–outsider interplay as it is associated

with the primary, filmmaker gaze constructed via a 'complex, often precarious and always negotiated process' (McDonald et al. 2019: 190). The following analysis of two TV segments, both created within the commissioning framework and editorial guidelines of the BBC, offers an illustration of the impact of this self-positionality. The presenters each visited May Day (in 2016 and 2017 respectively), yet their experiences differ significantly.

In *Coastal Path* (Horsey 2016) – a series title itself arguably evoking an idyllic imaginary – Paul Rose introduces Padstow from the perspective of an outsider touristic gaze (aimed at an outsider audience) as 'famed for its food' (a reference to celebrity chef Rick Stein's predominance in the town). Rose interviews members of the Old Oss party, asking 'What can I do to help?', before continuing *without pausing* for a response 'I can't join in, can I?' An exemplar of a filmmaker constructing their own outsider position, what might appear a culturally sensitive recognition of his outsider status is undermined by his lack of pause revealing the offer of help not to be genuine. Instead of opening a dialogue, he constructs his position as separate, thus one of the interviewees laughingly replies, 'Just keep of the way'. The next shot is Rose walking away with voiceover, 'Well that's me told' (Horsey 2016: 09:53): a seemingly defensive reaction even though the response was one that he discursively created. Voiceover (added in post-production) trivialises his obvious discomfort: 'It might be a serious business for some, but for the crowd it's a chance to let it all hang out' (Horsey 2016: 10: 05). The editorial position is further reinforced by a significant proportion of the segment (90 seconds (43%) of its three-and-a-half-minutes) occurring at Prideaux Place, where Prideaux-Brune (lord of the manor, framed as an authorised majority cultural voice) is similarly othering and adopts an outsider position (despite fulfilling an insider role as an apparent 'informant' to the filmmaker): 'But *the Padstonians* regard it as being something very, very special to *them*' (emphasis added: Horsey 2016: 11:44), a filmic subject colluding with the filmmaker themselves to construct the object being gazed at (Mulvey 1975: 17).

A more open approach results in a notably different outcome. In *Countryfile Spring Diaries* (Buffery 2017), Ellie Harrison similarly begins her feature with familiar shots of harbour and flags; but the London-centric 'down on the Cornish coast' then gives way to a more respectful language of 'celebrate', 'custom or ritual' and an empathetic, personal response: 'there's something about the collective singing and the collective dancing. It actually kind of makes me a bit choked' (Buffery 2017: 39:29). Like Rose, Harrison says to her Old Oss interviewees: 'you can't join what you guys are doing if you're a girl from Gloucestershire can you?' and later makes a big deal of the 'special invitation from the lord of the manor' to have 'special access' to see the Blue Oss dancing inside Prideaux Place, where a similarly significant 41% (150 seconds) of the segment occurs. Prideaux-Brune again perpetuates a colourfully painted insider–outsider dichotomy, 'You have to be a sixth generation Padstowan. There are occasionally the odd fistfights about who gets in and who doesn't' (Buffery 2017: 42:41). However, in contrast to the *Coastal Path* example, this assertion is subverted by the reality of what ensues, as Harrison is asked if she would like to join in, and is shown dancing with the club: 'Me? Really? Can I? This is amazing... Thank you so much! I can't believe I got to have a go. What a privilege!' (Buffery 2017:

43:48). Whether because of the more open (than the Old Oss) tradition of the Blue Oss, the fact the presenter is more empathetic and willing, that she is a young woman rather than older man, or perhaps had engaged in better research: self-positionality results in quite different presentations of the nature of the event and those celebrating it. Importantly too, the implications of the presenters' positionalities for the secondary gaze of an outsider audience can also influence majority perceptions of a particular culture: welcoming and open, or backward and defensive?

***Participation engenders representation***

These are all ultimately editorialised views; the filmmaker's gaze is a filter through which ICH is observed, captured, edited and passed on. To what extent might a more participatory approach synthesise the space between outsider—filmmaker and insider—subject to overcome this dichotomy? Erlewein argues for a participatory cinema that encourages respect, dialogue, and the dissolution of the rigid concepts of Self and Other (2015: 20). Filmmakers such as Barbara Santi have done just this, embedding themselves within the community they are documenting, adopting a participatory approach less about objective observation and more about engaged dialogue. *King for a Day* (Santi 2022) is a poetic, archive-led 60-minute documentary reflexively repurposing AV archive in a contemporary framing, working collaboratively with the families and community it depicts. Here Santi reflects on how her practice and perspective shifted through the process of making of this collaborative documentary with the people of Padstow.

***King for a Day: a collaborative film practice by Barbara Santi***

'I'm following in history, I'm following in tradition, that's what it's all about. It's your families' and your history' Jamie McOwen, Teaser of Old Oss party, *King for a Day*.

Unlike many TV programmes that perpetuate an outsider gaze, *King for a Day* aims to open up a contemporary dialogue about identity and Cornwall, seen from the unique viewpoint of the Padstow people. The Obby Oss is a powerful symbol of resilience, revealing a community protecting its boundaries. Padstow's AV archive enriches the community's unity and solidarity, and mobile phones and social media have empowered people with connections to Padstow far and wide to reconnect with their culture and share their narrative in their own way, exemplified by online presence such as *I Love Padstow May Day* on Facebook.

'If you move on too quick you'll forget your past...if you forget where you've been you're going to forget where you're going.' Alan Bate, Old Oss party, *King for a Day*.

Archive film of the Obby Oss led me to Padstow in 2010. *King for a Day* follows the descendants of the main characters depicted in *Oss Oss Wee Oss* 70 years later. Encountering community members after screening archive film in Padstow Social Club, it became strikingly evident that a more profound narrative than that typically presented underpinned the tradition. Initial interviews about May Day soon steered towards how Padstow had changed and how tourism was adversely affecting the community. Observations and questions during filming examined the multidimensional relationship between place, community, and filmmaker. Distinctively, *King for a Day* uses immersive documentary practice to interpret Padstow's cultural heritage, taking inspiration from the concept of 'deep mapping' as a layering of narratives of community and place (Pearson & Shanks 2001; Biggs 2019).

My filming methodology evolved during production. I embraced Padstow's AV archive and used it to engage with people. This exchange resonated given people's passion for their heritage. Other methods included ongoing conversations and screenings of work-in-progress, building friendships and networks outside of May Day, and, since the completion of the documentary, sharing any profits from its distribution. This has redefined the concept of the insider–outsider gaze in my work, presenting a more complex, fluid relationship, which ebbs and flows like the River Camel of Padstow. Being an outsider has given me the motivation and vehicle to 'find out', to ask questions; but as I live and work in Cornwall and am interested in cultural heritage and archives, these aspects have given me greater access than other filmmakers and ethnographers who have little engagement or common ground with its custodians.

These dialogic methods guided me towards an inclusive methodology that continuously assesses issues around ethics and power. Participants affect the film in various ways, including what they allow the filmmaker to record, so the boundaries of what is possible are constantly shifting, negotiated, and renegotiated. I have always been led by the families while attempting to push access restrictions to gather footage of unseen moments and present a more reflective explanation of the custom and community. This led to access that is not for non-Padstow people gradually becoming possible for me over the years, enabling me to present a more personal perspective not seen before from an outside filmmaker. Filming vignettes into people's lives which are not public facing – for example, fishing off rocks or cooking crab for May Day – are private moments that are ritualistic, spiritual aspects of the tradition. These scenes were filmed unobtrusively, as if I wasn't there. At other times, contributors talk to me directly and I to them, bringing me closer into their world.

Time and transparency have been key to gaining trust. For example, early in the filming process, party members would block access to the Obby Oss' first sightings, ensuring that locals had the best views. In recent years, the

‘inner circle’, as I call them, would actively encourage me to get nearer to the action. In some ways, the families have tested my ‘worth’, and ‘giving back’ to the community has made me an ally rather than an outsider. It has been a constantly shifting and, at times, challenging process, but always driven by my interest in two-way engagement. The need for a flexible approach is at the heart of the collaboration. Distinctively, in my film, for the first time, community members talk on camera, not in sound bites, but as a slow, reflective process in the form of oral histories. These interviews reveal people’s opinions and inner thoughts, and the film becomes a powerful social record and testimony of the Padstow people and their living culture.

### **Audience gaze: representations of a future past**

The secondary ‘gaze’ of the audience can be understood both in terms of context and of content. Much as the filmmaker holds power by selecting their subject, frame, and focus, so too does the commissioner, collector, curator (and organisational policy) act as gatekeeper to audiences’ ability to access the archive: this is not a neutral process (Sabiescu 2020: 505). Where there is a benefit to majority stakeholders (where a title is, for example, considered to be of ‘national significance’), it may be ‘authorised’ and collected, securing its preservation. In some instances, this does act to increase its visibility and accessibility for all, as is the case with Pathé newsreel and popular titles like *Oss Oss Wee Oss* (Lomax 1953), which is held in multiple formats across many settings and is therefore relatively easy to access (at least to view – rights for reuse are more complicated). Other artefacts are rare, fragile and practically inaccessible, such as a 1920 film from Truro-based amateur cinematographer Major Gill held on a VHS tape by Royal Cornwall Museum, and possibly also in its original celluloid format by The Box archive, Plymouth. Such artefacts are difficult to access due to lack of cataloguing detail and scant digitisation which can make it difficult even to verify their existence. Simply put, for an artefact to have an audience, it must be accessible to view. Within the context of ICH this has clear implications for AV material’s capacity to be a tool for revitalisation: Curtis and Proschon give the example of recordings of Passamaquoddy and Zuni heritage being kept undigitised by the Library of Congress for 90 years before finally being shared with the cultures themselves (2009: 5).

Notwithstanding the accessibility or otherwise of an artefact, the implication is that it is aimed at an audience. Its perspectives and narratives, explicitly or implicitly conveyed, present the ICH for reception and interpretation, with potentially as many responses as there are audience members. In the case of many of the artefacts already mentioned – *Oss Oss Wee Oss* and the BBC clips, for example – the implication is that the intended audience are majority-outsiders, indicated by the explanatory tone, narratives activated (such as the touristic idyll), as well as the filmmakers’ positionality, as described above. But on other occasions the audience is insiders, such as on

social media sites where film clips and artworks are shared and those commenting are clearly part of an insider community. These audiences' responses reveal much about different perspectives and narratives about May Day in particular and minority culture in general. For example, in the comments beneath *Oss Oss Wee Oss* on YouTube, discourse moves between a constructed-as-insider position ('Sincere thanks for this upload. My Dad was born in Padstow in 1946 and my late Gran who was born in 1916. Dad will be thrilled to watch this and I'm quite sure he will recognise a few people!' (@highten443)), and an othering outsider position ('English folk customs are so adorable and mad' (@pseudonamed)). Often, these two audiences meet and interact: sometimes positively, but not always. One commenter on a *Cornwall Live* video clip of May Day on Facebook opines 'Once is an experience twice is boring' and receives the response 'Feel free to leave it to the locals who the day is intended for then knobhead', the latter comment receiving 21 likes (Cornwall Live 2022). The audience gaze may be available to all, but that does not mean that responses are uncontested. The online audience similarly works together to moderate content to amplify the minority voice in response to a BBC Devon clip (Spotlight 2013) shared on Facebook that erroneously claims only the Red Oss is for Padstow locals, three successive commenters noting the mistake. In these examples, we see outsider responses commensurate with an 'othering' gaze; but we also see insider audience members contesting and reshaping the narratives. This may be via circumventing the majority construction altogether (as in the personal response of the commenter above who evokes his Padstonian relatives), or by actively contesting it, as in the *Cornwall Live* example (see Koreinik & Hodsdon, this volume). The particular affordances of social media, with the facility for any audience member to upload a comment, are of course what facilitate the more active participation and negotiation seen here.

Beyond reactions to a particular artefact, this insider-audience gaze upon their own ICH, even in response to that of a majority-filmmaker, can have profound ramifications. In *King for a Day*, Blue Oss Master of Ceremonies Michael England talks about May Day as

a phenomenon that's been archived both by ourselves and a lot of other people. We owe a lot to the other people who have come along and provided recordings and pictures. If someone hadn't come in and recorded it, that would have been lost. It's something that we've got as a record and a testimony to May Days of that period. Without that we wouldn't have anything.

(Santi 2022: 13:55)

This comment offers a more nuanced perspective on the outsider filmmaker's relationality to the ICH community that comprises the subject of their film. Filmmakers' fascination with the day, however its gaze is constructed, has created a rich archival resource that is not only valued for itself but is folded into the meaning and practices of May Day for the people of Padstow. By becoming the audience as well as the subject, a self-reflexivity is generated that arguably can increase the cultural value ascribed to May Day for the community as it moves into the future, potentially bolstering its resilience.

This shifting between a secondary, tertiary, and even primary gaze – again nuancing the passivity of the subject – is also linked to the affordances of digital and social media. Films and images from the last 60 years evidence growth of physical audience in the streets of Padstow on May Day. Larger crowds bring more media attention, which in turn can encourage larger crowds. Thus, an AV audience can become a real audience, potentially inserting themselves into the archive (shifting themselves from secondary to tertiary gaze should they appear in shot). In particular, evolving technology (digital video compared to celluloid) allows for mass acquisition and sharing of media, indicating a move away from simply experiencing the event to actively being involved via production of new material, not only by visitors but also the town’s participants (mobile phones in hand) as documenters themselves – acting as subject, filmmaker and audience simultaneously. Social media sites like ‘I Love Padstow May Day’ provide a relatively unencumbered editorial freedom for self-reflexive representations by and for insiders. The democratising potential of social media in allowing anyone with an internet connection and smartphone to have a voice, though this still not neutral (Mansell 2016), has the potential to shift the locus of storytelling power onto individuals rather than institutions: as authors but also as audiences, motivated to share their ICH with others; and potentially too as subjects appearing in those films. The gazes in our triptych are thus becoming increasingly indistinguishable. What future ICH will make of an AV archive located as much in social media as in institutionally commissioned narratives remains to be seen: but the influence of AV artefacts on the transmission and representations of an ICH event may be increasingly integrated into a self-authorized heritage discourse as the bearers of ICH become their own commissioning editors.

### **The subject gaze: ‘Christmas and birthday all rolled into one’**

The archive also demonstrates how May Day performs a crucial social function for participants through the third gaze in our triptych: that of the participating subject. John Bishop’s short documentary *Oss Tales*, shot in 2004 (revisiting Padstow ‘to see if the festival had changed in the intervening fifty years’ since *Oss Oss Wee Oss*) opens with images of Osses and Teasers dancing, then cuts to a smiling young man who says, ‘I can’t believe it. It’s actually here again. It’s like Christmas and birthday all rolled into one May Day’ (Bishop 2007: 00:01:19). Throughout the archive, we return to successive (male) generations of the same Padstow family: Colonel Bate in BBC newsreel *Obby Oss Man of Padstow* (1962), Charlie Bate in *Oss Oss Wee Oss* (1953), Patrick Bate in *King for a Day* (2022), Anthony Bate in *Pass it On* (2023). In the latter film, made for the *Re:voice* project, Anthony Bate tells us (in an almost verbatim echo nearly 20 years later) ‘the only thing that keeps me going really is May Day, it’s like birthday and Christmas and everything, all rolled into one’ (Browne 2023: 08:06). In *King for a Day*, Sid Porter calls May Day

The most important day of the year. Christmas is nice. We have seven grandchildren, two great grandchildren, and another one on the way. And seeing

them at Christmas is wonderful. But seeing that Obby Oss come out is something else.

(Santi 2022: 00:21:22)

These multiple references to Christmas (whether consciously echoed from previous films or not) demonstrate the cultural importance of the event for the community and its centrality to their identity, cemented by conventions of dress, codes of behaviour, and rituals which have evolved to signify the May Day custom, here manifest in the on-screen interplay over time between the protagonists of the successive films. Colonel Bate, interviewed by a news reporter, explains that he has the job of 'bringing the Oss out' as a descendant of the family that has been doing this 'for a hundred and fifty years', and continues, 'After I go west, all the family will go right through for another thousand years... they'll follow in the footsteps' (BFI 1962: 00:52). Teaser Jamie McOwen responds to representations of his predecessor, explicitly couching his perception in relation to archive: 'If you see all the old films, he is there dancing and you think, oh my God' and reflecting on his part in continuing the tradition: 'But it makes me feel proud to follow in his footsteps. To think that I could do half the job he does, 'cos everyone used to say what a dancer he was' (Santi 2022: 46:29). Here, the subject in one film directly shapes the practice of the subject in another, via the latter's role as audience, speaking across the generations. Antony Bate in *Pass It On* (Browne 2023) likewise locates the event firmly within an inherited, living tradition, pointing out the extent to which his family is imbricated in May Day both diachronically 'That's my great, great, great grandad that is', and synchronically 'That one there's my second cousin, that's my second cousin'. He positions the purpose of the event explicitly in this context, inseparable and irreplaceable into other contexts: 'What you're... actually celebrating it for, is to do with family ties, and celebrating with your family, and what's been going on for hundreds of years' (Browne 2023, 00:04:02). Across the archive, we see and hear the reflexive subject gaze of Padstow's insiders echo the intrinsic significance of their event, the filmmaker's gaze both challenging or undermining the value of the ICH (by othering it and those who practise it) and being an intrinsic contributor to the construction of that value.

### **Discussion: navigating the zone of cultural osmosis**

As we suggested at the opening of this chapter, the potential of the AV archive to shape and reshape both insider and outsider imaginaries and perceptions of minority ICH is significant, particularly where 'insiders' have been minoritised by broader socio-cultural processes. In commissioning frameworks, as exemplified in the Puttnam report on the UK's broadcast television sector (Freedman & Goblot 2016), while there have been moves to diversify content, there remains a significant block to a more pluralist worldview, where 'too many decision makers continue to walk the same metropolitan (and sometimes suburban) streets and eat in the same restaurants to truly appreciate and hence reflect a fast changing UK' (Freedman & Goblot 2016: 125). Thus, a majority cultural gaze tends to dominate

mainstream representations of minority expressions of ICH, whereas ‘a devolved television system would simply allow distinct communities to decide what stories to tell and how to tell them’ (Freedman & Goblot 2016: 122).

Desirable though such pluralisation might be, this is not to imply, however, that the outsider perspective should not be voiced, as we have seen throughout this chapter. Rather, it is the manner in which it is done that can be just as important. As Erlewein observes, since ‘audio-visual representations of ICH are not windows into the world but are constructed in an encounter, the camera should not mark a demarcation line between cultures but rather a possibility for dialogue and exchange’ (Erlewein 2015). Ginsburg, too, suggests that there is no clearly demarcated ‘right’ or ‘wrong’, but rather:

Questions about the legitimacy of one’s presence in a [setting...] in which power relations are unequal as an outsider with a camera should always be raised [...]. The fact that the people one is dealing with also have cameras and choose to represent themselves with them should not diminish that concern, nor does it make the act of taking those images by outsiders illegitimate. Filming others and filming one’s own group are related but distinct parts of a larger project of reflecting upon the particulars of the human condition, and therefore each approach raises its own sets of issues regarding ethics, social and power relations.

(1991: 103)

As participatory filmmakers have long indicated, as does UNESCO’s observation that AV archive can be a living, vital force for creating new audiences amongst insiders, in this fluidity lies a potential to both better understand the dynamics at play in historic AV artefact production as well as provide a basis for ethically capturing performances of living heritage in the future.

What, then, might this space for ‘dialogue and exchange’ look like in the filmmaker/subject encounter through ICH? This will inevitably vary with the impetus driving the film: other modes of documentary filmmaking may deploy the gaze in different ways, such as that described by McDonald (2019) which relies on a more explicitly outsider viewpoint. But for our context – where an outsider perspective seeks to adopt a position of more or less authority in relation to a minoritised practice – the relation between the gazes and the positionalities may require further reflection. In seeking a shared space in which power relations are appropriately navigated, we suggest that the well-known model of ‘zone of potential agreement’, developed by Fisher, Ury & Paton (2011) as an approach to negotiation leading to ‘mutually acceptable’ outcomes, may provide a useful framework (Figure 11.2). Adapting the ‘zone of potential agreement’, we propose a ‘zone of cultural osmosis’ (ZOCO) as a place of exploration, where each actor has a certain degree of agency over their position on the insider–outsider continuum in the filmmaking process. Framed by the outsider—insider spectrum (seen as shifting and relational rather than absolute (see Hodsdon, this volume)), on the top right is the insider subject (at its simplest, the object of the gaze), on the bottom left, the outsider filmmaker

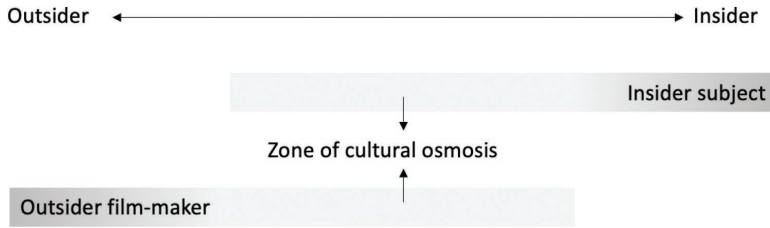


Figure 11.2 Zone of cultural osmosis, adapted from Fisher, Ury, and Patton 2011.

(at its most extreme, the othering primary gaze). As can be seen from the diagram, individuals in both positions have the ability to move inwards, towards the other end of the spectrum (although almost certainly never fully reaching it). Where those overlap is the *zone of cultural osmosis*, the place of ‘mutually acceptable’ outcomes, where – based at least on the way that the AV archive can be seen both shaping and being shaped by the ICH practice in the data analysed here – we might find fruitful ground for all actors to leverage the AV archive so as to contribute to the ICH’s resilience, as well as for it to be a source of mutual understanding rather than contention.

Pathé newsreels can be plotted in the lower left quartile. Similarly, *Coastal Path*’s Paul Rose fixes himself firmly as an outsider, creating his own narrative of self-exclusion, whereas *Countryfile*’s Ellie Harrison progresses over the course of her segment from a similar starting position to Rose moving towards the right into the ZOCO, arguably (just) crossing over into the insider range when teasing the Blue Oss. Lomax used creativity to shift into the mid-zone, still an outsider but with a warmth and openness that granted access to capture scenes like dancing in the Golden Lion on the eve of May Day. Santi places the community at the heart of a participative process and over time, while retaining an outsider rootedness, *King for a Day* also moves towards the far right of the lower spectrum. Conversely, beginning firmly in the top right quartile, members of the Old Oss party, Bates and McOwens, in allowing access and insight into their community and even family rituals, reach down into the ZOCO, sharing insights for the curious outsider and future descendant alike. Likewise, in adopting a filmmaker and/or audience’s perspective themselves by filming and sharing their own smartphone footage, an insider may drift towards the left of their range. We suggest that this model can be both observational, as above, and a tool for self-reflection. It can describe not only a self-conscious, behavioural approach; but it can also describe how, in a more nuanced understanding of who is gazing upon whom and by what means (coupled with the dialogic affordances of digital and social media), the triptych of gazes themselves can become fluid, and thereby make more permeable the divide between outsider-filmmaker and insider-subject. Further analysis using the model might illuminate other insider movements, such as how participating in a documentary or news feature interview elevates individual perspectives to be (perceived as) authority voices and so create internal distinctions along the insider range (Henley 2020: 206). It might also be used proactively as a tool for filmmakers to better

and more ethically reflect on their own positionality and engage with, record and represent minority culture – as filmmaker, academic, or casual visitor; or indeed by an insider-actor to be more conscious of the outsider context inherent in AV representations that have become part of the cultural fabric of their event.

## Conclusion

From an 1830s etching, through over 150 years of captured light, and 100 or so years of moving image and sound recordings, the *Re:voice* AV archive database illustrates the longevity of this annual event along an evolving continuum, recording and reflecting subtle changes in the gazes at play. Despite representations often being via a remote, othering gaze, the filmmaker's starting position can change and become closer to (or indeed more distant from) the insider-subject. Through dialogue with insiders, particularly over prolonged periods, the filmmaker gaze of self-other, insider—outsider can become fluid. Similarly, the subject may also become audience and primary observer. And all are influenced as audience by the legacy of AV archive that exists as memory and resource, even as insiders in turn create and contribute to that legacy, participating in formal production, or simply capturing the event on their phone for posterity. And so, from Lomax's pioneering dialogic approach, through Harrison's respectful enthusiasm, to embedded participatory methods like Rowe's, or Santi's community-led approach, to the use of smartphones and social media by insiders acting as filmmakers, audience, and subjects simultaneously: social and technological evolution has enabled the edges of the triptych gazes to soften into a more holistic zone where the interplay between outsider and insider, observer and subject, majority and minority are constantly shifting negotiations of positionality, perhaps better expressed as a form of cultural osmosis. The three gazes can overlap, merge, and interact with fluidity.

The model above therefore resembles the hybrid identities possible in the film-making process (Ginsburg 1991: 106), and also the inherent plurality of roles, perspectives, and identities. The zone of cultural osmosis provides a framework and tool to contain and potentially guide this reflexivity and dialogue in a context of binary distinctions, as being reshaped as simultaneously distinct and more fluid (see Ginsburg 2018: 43). In the context of ICH, perhaps the question is whether such plurality is detrimental or instrumental in sustainable transmission of ICH in an increasingly homogenised mediascape, and how to ensure that sensitivity to the voice of the subject is enshrined in future representations. It is evident that – in Padstow as in other examples of AV artefacts capturing ICH – AV archive, even that produced by an outsider gaze, has a significant and valuable impact on the future performativity of the ICH event. So much is evidenced in the value ascribed to the archive by the Blue Oss Master of Ceremonies already quoted above (Santi 2022: 13:55). In this analysis, we have seen how filmmakers have largely operated at the far end of the outsider range, outside the zone of cultural osmosis; however, this seems to some extent to have been transcended by those films becoming embedded within the community's cultural life, 'reclaimed' by being co-opted by insiders as both audience and subject. Similarly, the participatory approach engenders a movement toward the ZOCO for all concerned. The answer to one of the questions posed

in this book – whether outsiders can, or should, contribute to the vitality of minority ICH—appears from this perspective to be a resounding ‘yes’. But the ubiquity of numerous gazes on minority cultural ICH—compounding that of the tourist in any number of post-industrial touristic regions in Europe and globally – must still give future filmmakers pause. Continuing reflection (using a framework such as the one above) on one’s self-positionality and how it is constructed; on the accessibility of the finished artefact and of the narratives about the minority culture that it creates and presents to a viewing public; and on the way in which participant-subjects can co-create or co-author their own stories: encountering the threefold gaze in these open, reflective standpoints is, we suggest, key to filmmakers ethically engaging in a dialogue through which all have a part to play in safeguarding the voices of a rich, vital culture.

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## 12 Negotiations and co-creations in the resourcing of intangible cultural heritage events

*Natalie Semley and Laura Hodsdon*

I think Montol [winter solstice festival in Penzance, Cornwall, UK] is really important for the community. It definitely needs support from officialdom. In some ways it doesn't, actually, because I think it will happen with no support at all. Actually, I take that back: it would be better with no involvement from officialdom at all.

(K81)

A frequent challenge to the resilience of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) events in minoritised cultures is the very practical question of resource: financial (funding) and human (volunteers). Navigating this inevitably brings insider-organisers into contact with broader socio-economic forces in order simply to make the events happen. Conversely, socio-economic forces may themselves impinge upon the way that an ICH event has previously been performed. The interplay between institutional or societal level drivers and local ones has been discussed widely in an ICH event context, for example in terms of: the impact of the tourist gaze (Fournier 2020; Picard & Robinson 2006; Barrera-Fernandez 2019) and commodification (Ballengee-Morris 2002; Bunten 2008); the relations between national or supra-national policies and discourses (e.g. Nic Craith 2008), and of course the changing relationships and meanings of the 'heritagisation' process via UNESCO (e.g. Testa 2020). But practical ambivalence about the best path for resilience by those most intimately involved in organising these events – as exemplified in the quotation above from an event insider in Penzance, Cornwall, discussing the town's winter solstice festival Montol – suggests that more needs to be done to understand (and communicate) the implications of practical issues of resourcing when navigating the barriers and opportunities it offers. In the context of this book, while all of these speak broadly to insiders (as locals) and outsiders (as organisations), a more nuanced understanding of the relationships between the different actors involved, as resolutions to these issues are variously negotiated, could help to chart a course between pragmatism and idealism. In order to do this, in this chapter we apply the lens of critical events studies to consider the resilience of ICH events in the context of resource drivers at different scales. Specifically, we use stakeholder theory, where we translate 'stakeholders' to mean individuals and groups located on the

insider–outsider continuum, to explore the dynamics of the interplay between them as they negotiate and co-create ICH in different ways.

The ‘critical’ imperative of a critical events studies frame requires exploration of the power dynamics at play, here to illuminate the interplay between majority and minority cultural actors. Critical events studies are in their relative infancy. Following Getz’s (1998) introduction of events studies, the popularity of events management literature has risen since the mid-2000s (Robertson et al. 2018). In 2008, Tribe noted that there remained a lack of understanding of how events are managed and governed (2008), observing the ‘insufficiently critical businesses’ (Robertson et al. 2018: 1) found within tourism and so emphasising the potential significance of critical approaches to management and governance – which he suggested are ‘essential for setting an agenda for ethical management, governance and co-existence with the wider world’ (Robertson et al. 2018). The call for criticality had started with management-based theory being applied within the events arena, including exploring the role of festival stakeholders (Getz, Andersson & Larson 2007), itself shaped by insights from tourism and heritage studies (Getz 1998). Critical events studies today are therefore seen to offer ‘a way to move away from the neoliberalism focus of the event subject area’ (Robertson et al. 2018: 867). By doing this, the critical event studies literature can ‘determine pathways beyond the managerial or functional base in which event management is historically housed’ (Robertson et al. 2018). ‘Events’ within this scope, and an ‘events management’ perspective, are situated within tourism management and driven by a commercial frame of reference. As planned events, the case studies discussed in this chapter vary in scale and context. The attributes of those involved in hosting the events are commensurately diverse. Previous studies have mapped festival stakeholder roles across festivals (e.g. Getz et al. 2007) to articulate who they are (i.e. regulator, facilitator, co-producer, supplier, collaborator, audience, and the impacted), and found that stakeholders can take on multiple roles and create unique relationships with festival organisers and one other. Here, we explore the roles and influences of various actors in the ICH ecosystem *as stakeholders* in negotiations and co-creation that happen within the resourcing of ICH. Social actors adopt different roles, in different places, at different times, for different reasons. As McCarthy and Wright observe, ‘ownership, authorship and voice are important’ (2015: 5) because they mark the unclear beginnings and ends of collaboration and co-creation.

To consider these variables, we reflect on ICH actors in the light of stakeholder theory (Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997). This aims to determine ‘who and what really counts’ in the perceived connection between funding and resilience. Stakeholder theory has a disciplinary basis in business management studies, and it allows focus on the impacts that funding (such as arts council or other types of grant) and other ‘external’ resource (e.g. professional event manager) have on the dynamics between actors. The theory is appropriate for a critical events studies perspective, as it explains the conditions under which ‘owners’ (i.e. of tangible and intangible assets) collaborate with ‘others’ who are of value to them, and it allows the relationships which exist to be explored in depth. It has been widely used within critical events studies to explore power relations and ownership. For example, Getz & Timur

(2011) explore stakeholder relationships to establish how different voices could be heard and to balance conflict between stakeholders; Fidella, Holmes & de Busy (2022) explore an event lifecycle to address the issue of salience being treated as static; and it has been applied from small-scale (Capriello 2018) to mega events (Stevens et al. 2023). Some authors have found the theory to be less useful in certain contexts (Duignan, Carlin & Parent 2023), such as mega sporting events (Stevens, O'Brian & Gowthorp 2023), but it has been widely adopted within a critical events framework. In outlining stakeholder theory, Mitchell, Agle & Wood (1997) build upon the work of Freeman (1984) to define stakeholders and their roles in a more stringent way than had been done previously, hence its popularity within the literature. Although it is focused on an organisational management context, here we adapt it to an ICH ecosystem. Mitchell and colleagues propose that

classes of stakeholders can be identified by their possession or attributed possession of one, two, or all three of the following attributes: (1) the stakeholder's power to influence the firm, (2) the legitimacy of the stakeholder's relationship with the firm, and (3) the urgency of the stakeholder's claim on the firm.

(1997: 854)

where here, we replace 'firm' with 'ICH event'. These attributes are understood as follows:

- *Power* draws on a Weberian understanding where it is defined as 'the probability that one actor within a social relationship would be in a position to carry out his [sic] own will despite resistance' (Weber 1947 cit. Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997). They propose that 'a party to a relationship has power, to the extent it has or can gain access to coercive, utilitarian, or normative means, to impose its will in the relationship' (Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997: 865).
- *Legitimacy* refers to social acceptance and a belief that one's actions 'are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions' (Suchman cit. Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997: 866).
- *Urgency* is a more dynamic attribute and is defined as the degree to which stakeholder claims call for immediate attention (Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997: 867). In the context of ICH events, we consider this to include threats to the resilience of an event.

It is in the combination of these three attributes that a stakeholder becomes more or less *salient*, where salience is defined as 'the degree to which managers give priority to competing stakeholder claims' (Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997: 869), which here we translate as meaning 'most desirable for the resilience of ICH'. They suggest that 'the salience of a particular stakeholder [...] is low if only one attribute is present, moderate if two attributes are present, and high if all three attributes are present' (Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997: 879).

In this chapter, then, we draw on data collected at and around live cultural events in Cornwall, Frisia, and Livonian areas of Latvia and Estonia (see Appendix 1), focusing on the theme of resourcing – human or financial – of the resilience and performance of ICH, and consider them in the context of *power, legitimacy, and urgency* in order to identify which insider or outsider stakeholders are salient for ICH resilience, how, and when.

## Analysis

### *Volunteering and ‘human resource’*

Our dataset attests strongly to the social value of volunteering in creating a community of practice, something noted by Getz (1998) in an events management context. One Penzance local at Golowan described how ‘I’ve put in a little bit of my own personal time. Like for example there is a stage there that I made twelve years ago and that’s my contribution, if you like, to the festival’, reflecting their feeling of being part of a collective with power, as ‘A lot of people incrementally do their little bits and pieces’ but ‘collectively as a whole it’s quite a big thing’ (K70). Another related how they had enjoyed participating as a child and ‘to now be able to actually be able to give stuff back to Golowan, to the town, that’s really nice’, because ‘I’m serving the community, I’m giving back’ (K83): the link to childhood involvement perhaps asserting legitimacy in that role. In Padstow, legitimacy of volunteer roles is conferred by ‘a committee and trustees’, although in reality there is a sense that authority is implicit due to the repetition of the ritualesque elements as they have been transmitted over time: ‘there’s very few changes really because it’s the same things most years’ (K86). In Frisia, the sense that the ‘whole village’ gets involved leads to efficiency: in organising a coffee break at one event, ‘everything was executed really well’ and ‘it was effortless’ (F43). Here, there is a power in being able to organise the event with so little friction as well as legitimacy in the sense that it is a joint village effort.

Despite the benefits to volunteering, however, a number of interviewees also sought to withdraw from their role as powerful, legitimate stakeholders. One Livonian signalled their intention to retreat as an active stakeholder in cultural life, as ‘I have done so much, worked for everything. It is no longer for me’ (L26). This ‘volunteering fatigue’ (Hinch & Cameron 2020) recurred across our contexts. One Padstonian (K87) was ‘getting tired, and I am feeling like it is time for me to take a step back from it soon’. They reflected on the impact this would have on their power and legitimacy: in the non-hierarchical context of May Day, they felt that they might ironically increase their salience:

I feel I have not enjoyed it as much as I might because I’ve been so involved, and I’m really looking forward to being that old guy, who says they’re all doing it wrong – I can’t wait to be that guy [laughs]. I’ve had loads of them my whole life telling me what I was doing wrong and I can’t wait to be that guy and to just enjoy all the good bits.

Conversely, a Golowan insider who stepped back from their active role found this a difficult transition, beginning to actively avoid the event as ‘Part of the reason that I don’t like being here now is that I’m not telling people what’s happening’ (K80). The loss of power and legitimacy in this case, and the commensurate loss of salience, seemingly impinges on identity and so enjoyment of the event. This ‘giving back’ sometimes manifested itself more as a duty than a choice. For some this was positive – or at least neutral – as one Padstonian put it ‘it’s just what you do’ (K85). For others, this was more of an imposition, as one Livonian: ‘What I’m familiar with, I feel responsible for, and I see what all has to be done, so it’s like a burden for me’, although they were also realistic and practical about their sphere of influence as ‘in reality, you can’t do everything’ and so ‘the most important thing is to at least do something every day’ (L61). The corollary of rejecting legitimacy is, of course, the struggle to obtain it. Where there is not collective agreement, because ‘many people put so much energy into it’ this can lead to ‘disagreements, and there can be times when actually, people are so passionate [...] that they’re so convinced what they’re doing is the right thing’ that ‘sometimes weird politics and stuff happens’ (K83). Not only can this potentially compromise delivery of the event, but as this interviewee says in response: ‘I don’t care, I don’t want to hear it’ (K83), so it can also alienate those who have not been involved in the power struggle. Along with the risk that struggles for salience arise between them, this reliance on volunteers as active stakeholders comes, of course, with risks to ICH resilience. In Frisia as with the other contexts, ‘as long as there are volunteers it will keep going; and once it stops [...] then it becomes much more difficult to do things’ (F48). When there are few people willing or able to enact their power on a voluntary basis, the situation for the event’s resilience can become urgent within a small space of time, as one Livonian stakeholder found: ‘At the moment, there is not one person who is committed to it and doing it, and doing it with enthusiasm’ (L62). Over-reliance on individuals who are liable to *reject* their status as salient stakeholders poses a potential threat to resilience.

### **Financial co-creations or co-destructions?**

One of the ways that this may be addressed is through paid employees. On the face of it, this is a logical way to ensure responsibility and to endow salience by creating a specific position (Smith et al. 2014). But there is also a risk of changing the dynamics between stakeholders. One insider in a Cornish event run by volunteers (K91) related how ‘At the moment somebody organises the rehearsals and they don’t get paid’ and so there is a commensurately relaxed organisational approach as they ‘will tell us at the very last minute, and we will do a last minute scramble to try and tell everybody’. However, ‘if they were being paid’ and acted that way ‘I would be really annoyed’. As they go on to reflect, ‘As soon as someone gets paid, someone is responsible. All the time it’s a bring-and-share party, it’s a bring-and-share party’. The salience here – even if conferred by insiders – is so great that it perhaps ironically leads to an over-expectation of levels of professionalism and ability to deliver effectively.

It is not only in these moments of social connectivity that financial dependence can have an impact but also in a more fundamental context of delivery. As in the quotation that opened this chapter, interviewees in our dataset are conflicted about the extent to which finance – where those offering the finance of course become stakeholders – is desirable. Some Frisian respondents felt there should be more investment in Frisian culture, since without it ‘you just have to see if you can get by’ (F41). And yet in imbuing financial stakeholders with the power and legitimacy (and potentially urgency, where no other option is available) to enable an event, financial outsider forces become so salient that they become key to resilience, as the next part of the quotation above shows: ‘[the organisers] did go to the municipality in south-west Frisia, but they said “your reserves should be empty first and then you can come”’ (F41). And when the money disappears, so might the event: as one Frisian interviewee simply put it when asked what was the single biggest risk to them as an open air theatre, ‘That the bank says “I want my money back”’ (F100). Indeed, the ‘strings’ that often come attached with grants or loans are a clear manifestation of (usually outsider) stakeholder power. One Frisian production did not receive funding from the municipality one year because ‘there is a condition that you have to have performed something the year before, but last year we couldn’t do anything, so we couldn’t get the subsidy’ (F47); likewise, another’s receipt of state funding required it to be ‘innovative’ and so ‘We can’t only make pieces for which we know there is an audience because we won’t get subsidised anymore. [They say] “That will happen [anyway], so why would we give you money?”’ (F108). Sometimes this exercise of power is more implicit. When the increasing size of the production in Jorwert where ‘everything was huge’ and ‘except for the actors, everyone got paid’, it meant that ‘there was barely anyone from Jorwert in the organisation’ and as a result ‘a lot of people stopped helping out so we were entirely estranged from the village itself’. Despite this, the village continued supporting the event being run in this way since ‘they had a village cafe that could keep existing and make a profit because of it, so they still had a community location, because otherwise that would have disappeared’ (F102).

This shift concerning which stakeholders hold power can be vividly manifest in the potential risks to the event – whether in terms of its longer-term resilience, or in its remaining imbricated with the identity of those practising it as ICH relating to their minority culture. And so several interviewees were concerned about the effect on the content, rather than resilience of delivery per se. One Penzance local worried that ‘if everything was held and managed in a bureaucratic way I think it would stifle it to death really quickly’ (K78); another used similarly vivid language hypothesising that

if the businesses in town, the food economy businesses in the town in particular, if they became the organising committee for [May Day], it might look the same, it might smell the same, but it would not be the same, [... it would be] the death of whatever that was.

(K91)

By the same token, a Frisian respondent felt that, seemingly ironically, ‘the salvation of Jorwert was that the [financial] support stopped’, and if it had not, ‘that

would have been the death of Jorwert' since 'Every interview back then was about money and not about the performance or choices made, only money' (F112). The fact that all three of these interviewees use the word 'death' is a visceral manifestation of the potential consequences should the wrong stakeholder be imbued with power, legitimacy, and urgency.

Outsider institutional stakeholders may also become salient not only in terms of money but in other gatekeeping or enabling processes which, again, can have positive or negative effects on the event. One Livonian interviewee felt that 'red tape' could be frustrating as 'It's crazy when you own property and have to go and beg to be able to do something on your property' (L35) since 'if we could get that licence' (L36) action could be taken – yet this was proving difficult due to the need to navigate the bureaucracy. In Padstow, the approach has been one of direct resistance to those with power, as individuals 'have wilfully gone out of their way not to fill in road closure forms and risk assessments' (K91) and, according to one Penzance observer, asked how they managed the crowds at May Day the 'Padstow boys said "we just tell the police to fuck off" [laughs]'. The interviewee felt that this rejection of state-embodied power was commensurate with a carnivalesque spirit appropriate to the nature of the event: 'I thought yeah, we got to have a bit of thinking like that [...] you've got to keep that anarchy' (K80). While this approach clearly makes local insider-organisers collectively the most salient stakeholder, the distributed power structure in Padstow has also meant change is difficult: 'It's quite hard, because it's community run, there is nobody really in charge, so therefore there is no one to make that decision [...] for fear of offending other people' (K88). But following COVID-19 and another recent incident in which a spectator died during May Day, the interviewee reflected that 'I think we have to adapt' and that 'we have to take control of this' (K88). Becoming more proactive in claiming the legitimacy of their collective power might be one means for insider-organisers to remain salient rather than outsider-organisations.

There were some other indications of how insiders are able to contest, balance, or limit the amount and nature of potentially harmful outsider stakeholder salience. Although one Frisian felt they would benefit from 'more professional help' in delivering their production, they were cautious as 'I wouldn't want someone to say "I will do it for you" because then it isn't your own anymore'. They qualified their desire for help by clearly delimiting the sphere of influence to a specific element: 'We get very far on our own, but the financial aspect, I would like to have some more knowledge about that. Some advice or experience, perhaps' (F41). Others saw a broader stakeholder ecosystem working as a more holistic entity: one Livonian interviewee felt that, although 'it all depends on people, on human resources, on leaders', nevertheless 'Of course, there is no doubt that financial support is needed' (L1). Likewise, another Livonian respondent linked individual volunteers to higher scales of stakeholder input:

We know that people leave, as much as new people come in, who are ready to act and to take on some kind of public responsibility. There is, however, a lot of work and energy to be put in. That is the first level, if you like. Then

there is the next level, which is how interested is the municipality... Then there is the national level... So, I see it at as multi-level, because if there is only the local Livonian community who want to do something, but they do not have the support of the municipality, the state... it will not be enough to achieve results.

(L59)

There is a sense here of a broader collective of Livonians and allies at regional and national levels seeking to create the *conditions* for events to happen rather than support for the specific event. By recruiting stakeholders to act at a cultural rather than ICH-specific level, again the salience of specific organisations is delimited to a sphere of influence that less risks the exertion of influence on the performance of the event insofar as it is an expression of identity. Here, the ‘unclear beginning and ends’ (McCarthy & Wright 2015: 6) of co-creation become visible, and stakeholders take shared responsibility for a broader event environment as a ‘relationship between place, space, experiences and knowledge’ (Haanpää 2017: 5).

By limiting the power of professional outsiders and making it legitimate only in a very specific – or conversely very broad – context, this works to ensure that a particular (type of) stakeholder does not become overly salient in relation to the ICH itself. In another context, though, this duality may be seen as a conflict of interest: one interviewee in Cornwall revealed that ‘I haven’t got a role [in Golowan] anymore’, as although ‘I was completely involved in it [from] the first Mazey Day’, when they were subsequently appointed to the local council ‘I had to not be affiliated with anything’ (K80). The perceived risk is that an individual holding both insider-volunteer and outsider-organisation roles would render them disproportionately salient. When this dual role involves less direct involvement, however, this may conversely be an advantage: in Frisia, a sponsorship was agreed with a bank representative who is ‘with heart and soul a lover of Open Air [theatre] in Jorwert’ (F100): this stakeholder somewhat straddling the role of outsider-organisation and insider-spectator again suggesting a more resilient, less contingent pathway to funding; funding through the community network, rather than being imposed upon it. This sponsorship model is another means by which this balance has been achieved: individuals ‘pay 250 euros for two tickets and some drinks and food’ and ‘we have a little network breakfast as well’ (F100), meaning that a wider community of practice is created that can also contribute financially without a single organisation becoming disproportionately salient. Likewise, a Frisian interviewee in a different village felt that ‘it is very important to connect people to you, or even more so to connect to companies’ for sponsorship directly in response to the fragility of state funding, as ‘business can be a constant factor, if you have the province or state in the background threatening with budget cuts’ (F66). As well as the logic of spreading sources of income, the implication of sponsorship by a company or collective of individuals is to increase legitimacy (in their more personal or directed support for the event itself, as opposed to a grant won competitively, say) and urgency (in their being able to potentially step in should a threat arise) but crucially not power in terms of their ability to ‘be in a position to carry out their own will’.

This sense that different events are vying to attract interest speaks to the creation, performance, and reception of the event in terms of its content and intended audience. As one Frisian respondent observed, ‘the audience is also the paying guest, so they decide’ (F39). However, this is a balance to be struck, as one Frisian creator claimed, ‘I never do it for the money’, though admitting ‘Sometimes it is a disadvantage, because I only do things I find challenging, but sometimes other things pay more. My accountant sometimes says “You should have done that”’ (F37). In a creative sense, another Frisian creator reflected on the fact that although they had joined the production just as ‘it was at the verge of bankruptcy’, in fact with hindsight ‘that is actually the best moment to start’ because ‘we went from so much money in debt back to building an organisation’. Shifting the locus of power back into the collective – ‘I don’t do that alone of course’ – nevertheless means a greater level of urgency onto the individual driving it since ‘It has to go well, there is no option that it can’t go well’ (F102).

### **Threats to intangible cultural heritage and stakeholders’ actions**

Urgent action by stakeholders may become necessary when the success of a particular event or its longer-term resilience becomes threatened. The dataset shows crises of this kind being addressed (or solutions suggested) in various ways. Some respondents were clear that funding – and often the institutional support that goes with it – was key (as in the examples above). For others, the financial imperative was simply unimportant:

we did have to go into our savings to finance things, but fortunately we don’t have any debts yet [...] We are a simple amateur club, we don’t have to make any money, we always say. As long as we can cover the costs, it is fine.

(F47)

although this approach clearly does not guard against unexpected challenges.

But in practice, the data indicate that individuals at the local level are more likely to play a key role in dealing with threats to the event: as individual insider-stakeholders’ self-mobilisation as a response to the threat of Covid-19 shows. One Frisian respondent (F41) related how the disruption led to the existing cast pulling out, the threat to the play causing ‘some panic, we didn’t have [the main role]’: but this was solved by leveraging local connections as ‘we found [a new actor] in the village, who I did a one act play with once, but for the rest she has no theatre experience’. Although their inexperience was ‘a challenge’, existing connections and willingness to get involved enabled the issue to be resolved. Although the financial ability to ‘balloon in’ outsider performers would also have been effective, power, legitimacy, and indeed urgency here remains within the collective purview of those practising the ICH, as well as perhaps forming new networks and connections for the future. Likewise, in both Golowan and May Day in Cornwall, existing connections were mobilised to ‘save’ the event for the year in which COVID lockdowns prevented mass gatherings. In Padstow, rather than processing in the

streets, ‘people sat in their gardens, and everybody started playing [the May Day song on their accordions]. You could hear it echoing from people’s gardens’ and although ‘it wasn’t quite the same, it was better than not having it at all’ (K88). These moments of local responses to urgent threats to the event also demonstrate the individuals’ legitimacy as stakeholders, indicated by the profound effect of the action. In Penzance, six members of the Golowan band (the maximum number allowed to congregate at the time) took it upon themselves to maintain the custom of playing through the streets at dawn: one of the performers felt that ‘it lifted the whole town’ (K83), and one interviewee related how hearing the band ‘made me cry’ because it ‘felt like something, and it felt like something quite a lot’ (K79). In enacting their power – such as it was within lockdown rules – to do *something*, a meaningful moment was created. In this collective, emotive moment seemingly lay the power to recreate some of the value of the event as ICH: the band member was receiving messages saying, ‘Is anything happening today?’ (K83); another related how ‘passers-by got involved’ in an impromptu Serpent Dance that claimed power as it ‘ignored the rules and did it anyway’ and resulted in people cheering and saying ‘Oh my god, it’s happening...’ (K81). For spectator-participants, the sense that the event fulfilled its role to some extent was enabled by the legitimacy and urgency of these local ‘do-ers’ who had the power in that moment to enact the event to the extent possible given the challenging context.

Conversely, the town council-run Redruth Mining and Pasty Festival aims to attract outsiders as much as local people to the event, with the explicit aim ‘to bring to a wider audience the fact that Redruth is a) the heart of Cornish mining and b) has this amazing cultural link with all these places around the world and actually makes amazing pasties’ (K90). When the event was cancelled for two years running (firstly due to COVID, secondly due to the death the day before of Queen Elizabeth), unlike Golowan and Padstow, the more impromptu, later ‘bite-size’ festival did not attract large crowds and attracted only one entry to the pasty competition. The event’s relatively recent establishment, as well as organisation being owned by the town council, means that the event is at one remove from being fully embedded – emotionally as well as practically – in the event community of practice. As such, although the town council as organisers could enact power and urgency, without this broader collectivity it lacked legitimacy in being able to recreate what had been lost. In contrast to the visceral reactions at May Day and Golowan, a local attendee of the ‘bite-size’ rearranged event, when asked how they felt when it was postponed, replied ‘I didn’t know it was postponed, actually’ (K93). High stakeholder salience across power, legitimacy, and urgency here ensures (or risks) the resilience of the event and creates a sense of what Getz (1998: 418) describes as ‘convergence of meaning’ that is generated through a communal sense of ownership and acceptance.

## **Discussion and conclusion**

The analysis above reveals the varying negotiations and co-creations that take place across the ICH case study events. Although there are important differences based on both context and content between the regions and the events themselves,

there are also commonalities in the ways that insider-organisers of the events seek to balance, contest, or assert their salience as stakeholders in order to safeguard the performance of their event as ICH. Using the key concepts in stakeholder theory of power, legitimacy, and urgency – which, combined, lead to greater salience – has shed light on ways in which the resilience of these events might be maintained. By unpicking the specific nature of different stakeholders' spheres of action, and the resultant salience to the event's resilience, the nature and cause of the ambiguity expressed in the quotation that opened this chapter can now be better understood. There is clearly an important role for outsider, 'official' stakeholders: but our dataset reveals stark caveats as to over-reliance on particular funding sources, shifts in audience or content, or any one individual or organisation having disproportional salience. Yet the risks of relying on (sometimes small numbers of) volunteers, the need to respond to crises such as COVID-19, and the need for at least some funding mean that these trade-offs must be balanced. In one respect, as we have seen, this is achieved best in situations where salience of outsider-stakeholders is limited to one or two of the three stakeholder attributes in Mitchell et al.'s model, such as by enabling sponsorship by individuals rather than relying on state funding. And yet the times when the combination of power-legitimacy-urgency are most vividly manifested are a collective claiming of that salience, flowing directly from the attributes of the event most closely associated with its role *as ICH*: its social connections, easily established roles and understandings of what the event *is* repeated from previous generations, and the profoundly emotive importance of the day within the cultural calendars and identity-shaping processes of the minority culture that practise them.

This analysis offers insight about how ICH events can act as a 'firm', describing collective claims to salience from insider-organisers and their capacity to balance trade-offs for longevity and ownership, and offers distinctive conclusions about the changing roles and levels of salience found across ICH events through the lived experiences of a range of actors in the ecosystem. The critical events study lens provides us with an understanding of how balance (Getz & Timur 2011) may be required to ensure longevity. The question of how to ensure the resilience of the events, then, seems to revolve around ensuring that this collective salience is itself appropriately (re)voiced. On one hand this means not so much resisting or rejecting majority-outsider influence in whatever manifestation but – in ensuring it does not become overly salient – rendering it an appropriate act of allyship rather than a 'strings-attached' arena for the enacting of power, however beneficently intended. On the other, it means paying attention to the vitality of the event community of practice and ensuring that there are enough of those willing to become part of that collective, insider stakeholder group that it is resilient in the short and long term. One of the means by which to achieve this could be by proactively co-opting individuals into the wider community of practice, with all the shared goals that denotes (see Moenandar, Moran-Nae & Hodsdon, this volume), whether permanent or temporary newcomers, supportive outsiders, or temporary visitors such as tourists. The contribution of those who do not share minority identity can still be vital, but crucially needs to be seen as legitimate by those whose ICH it is – and crucially

tempered by appropriate reflection on when outsiders' salience may become too great. Given the demands often placed on volunteers, who 'have to want it with heart and soul, it has to be your hobby' (F100), stipulations about who this should be may not always be realistic: the village board is

not going to say things like "25% of the actors have to be from Jorwert". That is unnecessary. Would that even be realistic? [...] Most Jorwerters know that it is a lot of work. Because if you are performing, and you join, you get a piece of paper with a hundred dates on it.

(F100)

And so the same Frisian interviewee reflected on how they might 'make sure that people who come here new start feeling like a Jorwerter':

A while back we needed volunteers, so I rang the doorbell [of a newcomer] and [thought] "we'll see". Lately, I was at someone's door and within five minutes he was already helping out. And I think that is lovely, because I also know that he will have a great time, because you can see what it is like to do something together. That's wonderful. Especially with the Open Air Theatre, I think that is fantastic, that with 100 people you aim for one thing: you go to the party together, I think that is the most beautiful thing about Open Air Theatre.

(F100; edited for brevity)

In Redruth, one attendee lamented the lack of enthusiasm where 'It seems now it's winding down a bit compared to what it used to be' which was particularly keenly felt for them since it has meant 'people moving down here don't really understand what it's like to live here' (K94). The association with pride in place is clear. This is true both from day to day and for the resilience of the culture: 'the future of Livonian, I would say that it depends on the local Livonian community' (L59) where collective action is the key to salience: 'Strength is not when one person hustles and does something, strength is when everybody does something together' (L61).

Creating this strength while balancing levels of stakeholder salience, then, is the collective challenge facing minority cultures. Funding in itself seems less important than creating the conditions where, in the face of threats to a community's ability to perform the ICH, as many people as possible are asking 'how do we do this? How do we keep this going?' (K83). It is precisely the lack of salience in a more traditional sense that creates meaning, shapes and reshapes connections, and embeds the event as ICH rather than 'just any' event. Rather than simply an issue of any outsider influence – whether financial, professional, institutional, or other – being 'bad' and local empowerment being 'good' for the appropriate safeguarding of the ICH, the complex negotiations, often contingent on specific scenarios or external forces, should instead aim to strike a balance between minority and majority salience so that the latter can act as allies without impinging on minority ownership. As we have argued in different contexts throughout this volume,

a broader view than simply focusing on the ICH practice itself, one that accounts for the ecosystem of which it is part and the dynamics between various insider and outsider actors within it, appears here to be crucial in establishing the social conditions for ICH to be resilient.

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**Part III**

**Futures**



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## 13 Revoicing beyond Europe? Conversations in global contexts

*Ayano Ginoza, Pania Te Maro, and Brian Tweed  
in conversation with Laura Hodsdon*

Throughout this book, we have focused on four case study regions (UK, the Netherlands, Latvia, and Estonia) containing three national minority cultures (Cornish, Frisian, and Livonian), all in a European context. While these share particular characteristics that distinguish them from many non-European contexts, the ramifications of which for intangible cultural heritage (ICH) are under-studied (see Hodsdon, this volume), the issues that have been explored are by no means unique to Europe. It is likely that, in some circumstances, more explicitly distinct cultures and, often, ethnicities may make some of the questions we have been asking in this volume irrelevant at best, or inappropriate at worst. Nevertheless, in increasingly globalising and homogenising cultural contexts outside Europe as well as within, by the same token it is helpful to ask to what extent ideas around revoicing may be applicable to national minority ICH outside of Europe, as well as considering whether concepts and approaches already used elsewhere might help us to better ensure resilient ICH within good social relations of intangible heritage in a European context.

As a first step in exploring potential synergies in a global context, this chapter comprises *Re:voice* project leader, and White British incomer to Cornwall, Laura Hodsdon, in conversation with colleagues from New Zealand and Japan. Ayano Ginoza is Okinawan, and her research at the University of the Ryukyus looks at cultures of militarism and feminist decolonial movements in Okinawa, Japan. Pania Te Maro is Māori with mixed European heritage and researches Education at Massey University, New Zealand; Brian Tweed (Brian and Pania are married) is a White English (pākehā) incomer to New Zealand who speaks te reo Māori (Māori language) and is also an Education lecturer at Massey University. Here, they offer their personal and professional reflections on the interplay of national majority and minority through intangible heritage in their own contexts.

*Laura:* The *Re:voice* research project explored how different people interact with intangible cultural heritage, and each other through that heritage, in an ecosystem where national minority and majority cultures co-exist in peripheral European contexts. We've been focusing on live cultural events as a way of taking a snapshot of a type of cultural heritage where there are a lot of people together in one place. I'd like to start by talking about events specifically, and then move to think about different people's

involvement in the culture more widely. What types of events are part of the minority culture's ICH that's most relevant to you? And who can get involved, and how?

- Pania:* We have a ceremony to welcome people, the *pōwhiri*. It lasts half an hour to an hour (or more depending on the occasion), and then afterwards people eat and drink together. After attending the ceremony people will often say (things like), 'I've been here for 10 years and I've never felt that I belonged. But now I feel this real sense of belonging'. And that's the purpose. That's the reason we do it. You want people to belong, and that's what Māori signed Te Tiriti for – the Treaty of Waitangi, the founding document between Māori and the British crown. And if Te Tiriti had been honoured, getting involved in Māori heritage wouldn't have *been* appropriation because everybody (I mean, the missionaries and the settlers who were there first spoke Māori), and every single person who came into the country would have been welcomed into it. So there was this ongoing trade, if we talk about it in an entrepreneurial way, built on reciprocity. But Te Tiriti was dishonoured and so it becomes appropriation, because we haven't been brought up together. But it didn't even have to be like that. So *pākehā* and *taiwi* (*new international migrant*) incomers walk a tightrope. They have to go softly, softly. But the *pōwhiri* is specifically set up to welcome people. You're there to be welcomed because we want you to be part of our *whānau*, our (national) *family*, and when you've been welcomed, the thing that makes you know you belong here is that you can come back anytime, but you've got to get back in the kitchen do those dishes. We're calling that the *Tea-towel-tanga!* So you know you belong.
- Brian:* There is another event that includes everyone, but in a different way. One of the biggest disconnections we have here is the celebration of northern hemisphere things like Christmas and Easter – but we're the southern hemisphere, so we have Christmas in the middle of summer. But in our winter – which is June, July – there is a Māori recognition of a particular star constellation, the Pleiades, which appears in a certain place over the horizon. When you see that, you know you've turned the corner and are heading towards summer. That's called *matariki*. In recent years it has started to gain prominence as a national celebration. It draws in everyone, not just Māori – it's a national holiday. So there has been a conscious effort to open it up for reasons of inclusion, to establish that here's the *Māori* new year. So *matariki* is the Māori New Year and December 31, that's *pākehā* new year. And I think people are starting to like that. In schools, *matariki* is celebrated, and so that will follow on with children carrying it with them when they leave school. It's signalling, actually, let's pay attention to where we are. We're not in the northern hemisphere, we're in the southern hemisphere.
- Pania:* There is also *kapa haka* (*Māori performing arts*). This is a revitalisation (strategy), a tool to revitalise our language which was disappearing as a result of the policy to stop it being spoken in schools. So *kapa haka* was

brought in. And it's a huge festival now, *matatini* it's called. And diaspora teams from all over the world compete.

*Brian:* This is an area where, if you're not Māori, being part of kapa haka is one of those tricky experiences. I've performed informally in school kapa haka groups – it was certainly a way in which I got to learn and understand te reo Māori better. It's not exclusive. If you're not Māori, if you can make the connections, then you can be you can be *part* of this. And it's one of those experiences that will change you.

*Laura:* *So while a culture may be selective or strategic in its essentialism, it sounds like that's not to say that it's not porous – so someone who has made those connections and who understands their positionality, who is culturally literate in that sense, could become part of the community that's practising it?*

*Brian:* Yes. But of course if you then started to say, 'Oh I don't think we should do that move, let's do this other move'... start doing that and you're going to find yourself quietly exiting.

*Pania:* Those are the points where people might say 'You're not Māori!'

*Brian:* It's not that you can't make suggestions. It's a pretty tricky space. It's very easy to trip over from suggesting to telling, or be seen to be telling. I mean, there's a lot of trigger points in all of that, if you're pākehā in a situation like that. I think you can stay safe if you just don't say anything, just follow other people and do the best you can.

*Laura:* *So someone could be constantly monitoring themselves. How might they navigate that space?*

*Brian:* It's making decisions such as saying 'No, I'm not going there at all'. Or 'I'm going to go there if someone asks me to do it and I can do it'. Or other times you might say, 'Yes, okay, this is something that I can ethically do with my own idea'. Over time, you come to understand cultural nuances more. For example, in the pōwhiri there is the question of 'Should I speak or not? And if I do speak, what position am I going to be in? What should I say?' You have to make some decisions. I've made every mistake possible. Speaking out of turn, saying the wrong thing, forgetting to say the right things. But I've got better at it.

*Laura:* *Ayano, in an Okinawan context, what sorts of cultural events are there? And what does that look like in terms of who's there and who's doing what, particularly given the prominence of tourism and incomer residents in Okinawa? Are they involved in watching or organising, or are there things that people shouldn't do unless they are Okinawan themselves?*

*Ayano:* We have a lot of cultural events. We practise ancestral worship instead of Shintoism, the Japanese religion, though we incorporate aspects of it. We perform our cultural celebrations according to the lunar calendar. One of them is *Eisa*, which is an Okinawan form of dance using drums – that is uniquely Okinawan. And there is *obon*, which is a three-day event welcoming our deceased ancestors' spirits. This might be compared to the Mexican event Day of the Dead. Obon is usually led by the first son of

the family, while women in the family prepare specific ceremonial dishes. But not all first sons stay on the island to perform the ceremony every year. In the ceremony we use Okinawan language for prayers, and it has to be carried out in a specific order and manner. Women who traditionally prepare the dishes learn the process as they grow up in the culture. But not all women grew up on the island, and many move to the islands by marriage. I have heard stories of them struggling. But traditionally, people from the community help out: relatives all gather; they come back from overseas for the event if they can. Usually, the elder women who have been trained from childhood to do their job lead the kitchen labour. Thus, if a person is from mainland Japan, they don't have to work alone.

The ceremony takes place at home and at their turtleback family tomb, a big tomb where the generations of the entire clan will be interred. There is a gathering space in front of the tomb for ceremonies. This particular event is not for tourists – but the tombs are outdoors, so tourists may see it and then stop by to watch it, but are not necessarily invited. If they were gazing from afar, I don't think anyone would prohibit them. But if they tried to enter or interfere with the ceremony, then someone may say something.

*Laura: Is it a public space or is it clearly set apart?*

*Ayano: The turtleback tomb has a short wall around it, about knee height. So it does indicate a bounded space, and people would probably hesitate to come within the wall.*

*Laura: If I moved into the village where this is happening and I'd been living there a year or so, would it be acceptable for me to go over the wall, or would I be watching from outside?*

*Ayano: If I invited you as a guest, you're probably welcome. But I think it's commonly the case that you would have to have connections in the community who was practising it. There are sacred places in Okinawa, places of pilgrimage, that Okinawans who have ancestral connections visit for prayers, and burn incense. Some of them are tourist sites. Those places are open to tourists, and they're not prohibited from taking pictures. As far as I could see, tourists are generally respectful, not interrupting the prayers or asking questions. I think that 'gaze' is something we've become more used to. Ten years ago, nobody came around residential areas – but nowadays with GPS, tourists want to explore non-touristy spaces. So even if the place is not in the guidebook tourists seem to be at liberty to drive and walk around our residential areas. First it felt uncomfortable. But now we are getting more used to that gaze, I think.*

*Laura: In both contexts we've mentioned this idea of outsiders to some extent navigating their encounter with people, with the culture. What sorts of pitfalls does that involve?*

*Ayano: On the social media feed, 'Relocating to Okinawa', many people express that they had visited Okinawa for a vacation and fell in love with it, and they are now moving here. And they were asking things like 'Can*

anybody help me find somewhere with a certain rent, a certain size...?’ And people on the feed give information willingly. And the newcomers seem to feel welcome here: the interactions they have on social media facilitate the friendly and warm impression of Okinawans and eventually their relocation to the islands of Okinawa. But those who move in and start to live here sometimes face challenges of cultural differences. That can be a form of culture shock.

*Laura:* *In the European contexts we’ve studied, the attractiveness of these peripheral regions has meant a lot of people moving in or wanting to rent holiday homes, meaning many local people can’t afford to buy houses, as well as the areas becoming very crowded or over-taxing health and transport infrastructure. Has the popularity of Okinawa as a tourist destination led to a similar situation?*

*Ayano:* Yes, it has. The Japanese government is concerned about a low birth rate while there are increasing numbers of elders to support. That means more tax on decreasing populations. However, Okinawa is one of the few prefectures in Japan whose population is growing, due to, for instance, the number of people moving here. There are even vacation houses marketed to mainland Japanese and non-Japanese people as such. Some are pricey, advertised for \$1,000,000 a condo. Some people move to Okinawa for jobs and live with families. Some didn’t think of Okinawa as their permanent home, but live here for years and decades. Then, they may say ‘I am an Okinawan’. I wonder what that means. Is it the length: they live here long enough to be encultured and to make a claim to Okinawan identity? But they still speak with a mainland Japanese accent and mannerisms. Also, Okinawans have distinctive last names, so you can tell if the person is from here or not by their last name. I have heard them commenting that: ‘I’m not welcome. I’m not accepted as Okinawan’. But I’m curious why they *want* to be an Okinawan.

*Laura:* *As someone from a very homogenised, somewhat disconnected majority culture who doesn’t have that strong sense of identity, there is something about the belonging, the community, the distinctiveness: I recognise that desire as compelling. But there is a privilege that goes with being able to think like that.*

*Ayano:* Yes, and that privilege enables them to move back and forth. Their last name is mainland Japanese, so they can still maintain a ‘Japaneseness’. They can ‘pass’ as mainland Japanese. That’s maybe part of their privilege too. And we Okinawans don’t get to do that.

We were an independent kingdom until 1879. We have different languages from mainland Japan, different cultures and a different way of life. Our features are different, we live in the only subtropical climate in the country and many of us have tanned skin. My parents went to mainland Japan as seasonal workers: they were discriminated against, and encountered the ‘No Okinawans’ signs in restaurants. In Okinawa we have 70% of the total US military bases that Japan agreed to host on its soil, despite

being only 0.6% of the land area of Japan. There have been so many US base-related violent crimes and contamination of the local environment perpetuated by the unequal Japan-US agreement, called the Status of Forces Agreement. Many activists, residents, and scholars have argued it is a form of continuing ongoing colonialism. So there are demilitarisation movements. This issue is labelled as an ‘Okinawan problem’, as if it is us who need to solve it. But in fact it is a Japanese issue, because US bases’ presence are justified as protection of national security and Japanese sovereignty. The mainstream Japanese media hardly report US base-related incidents and our movements. The lack of information and knowledge disguised by the subtropical tourist images is also a form of privilege. However, this is all the Japanese people’s issue and US people’s issue, not just Okinawans’. Okinawa is often seen as Japan’s Hawai‘i, a destination for healing, relaxing, enjoying the native culture, so there is still that gaze towards us. I teach a graduate course on native studies. A lot of my students self-identify as Okinawan but they don’t know how to articulate their Okinawan-ness in relation to this discursive status of coloniality and militarism. They are struggling with their identities.

*Laura:* Does this theme of privilege play out in a New Zealand cultural context?

*Brian:* I often say that I was sort of ‘called’ by *te ao Māori, the Māori world*. I was emotionally drawn to *te reo Māori*. I think it’s because for the first 30 years of my life I lived a disconnected life, as you were saying. And I think it’s very common for people to come to New Zealand, experience something Māori and have a profound moment of ‘Oh my goodness’. [*Pania:* A sense of belonging.] Here’s something that’s connecting me with this place. Then in that moment, you realise that you’ve never really had it before. One of my half joking phrases when I am asked ‘Where are you born?’ is that I used to be English – I don’t feel English anymore. I came to New Zealand in 1987 to teach maths and science. Looking back, I followed a well-worn path of colonial migration. I didn’t think of it at the time, but it was easy to come here, being male, White, English, teaching maths and science. They just said ‘Welcome, come on in’!

In terms of privilege, I think people can get conditioned into the idea that, firstly, they’re allowed to learn anything, know anything; and that secondly, the people that do know it should explain it to you. And that’s something that I think is problematic here for a lot of people wanting to engage with *te reo Māori*. That first of all there is a voice in the background saying ‘You need to know that’, or ‘That’s interesting, I want that’ – that acquisitive desire. But also demanding that Māori are there to explain things to you. Living with a bit of confusion and a bit of ignorance and a bit of not knowing: I think that’s one of the major things for incomers to accept. And it’s difficult to accept. Maybe there’s lots of things that you don’t know and don’t understand, but which you shouldn’t understand. There’s a notion that Georgina Tuari Stewart speaks about of ‘a passion for ignorance’,<sup>1</sup> of the negative power of managing your own ignorance,

which of course is a privilege. In this context, that would mean not learning too much, so as not to be *able* to form an opinion that interferes in Māori worlds. It's a privilege to be able to say 'No, I'm not going to learn something', or I'm not going to do something. That's still part of pākehā privilege, and I don't think you can rid yourself of it. And so the question is: how are you going to use that power that you have, that privilege that you have, in the best way you can? And part of that is definitely saying: there are some things that I can't do; there are other things that I can do from my own agency; but there are other things that I can do if I'm asked by the right people.

*Pania:* People can find themselves walking a tightrope. I've had students come back from teaching practice who have said things like, 'I was doing the *karakia* and this kid came up to me and went "How dare you? You're not allowed to speak our language"'. And they've come to me asking 'What are we supposed to do?'. What you do is you understand *why* that child and why that child's parents are coming at you like that. What are the reasons behind that? So you walk in humility. And you just say 'I'm really sorry' and accept that you have work to do. We have to pick up on ways to approach this. At the same time, of course, there are people who think pākehā who speak te reo are wonderful, they thank them. It's one extreme to the other. But I think there are non-Māori people who need to be okay with being told off for getting things wrong. There are different ways of being told off, and we all get embarrassed when we do something wrong. But it's about being okay with someone saying, 'Don't sit there. You're not supposed to sit there'. And not feeling *embarrassed* but saying 'Okay. I'm not supposed to sit here'. But also it's about being a part of things – get in there, don't just stand there. I used to stand at the door going 'What shall I do?' and you just get looked at. And that's the tea-towel-tanga. Just look for a job you can do quietly, sit down and do it. Don't ask, just quietly do it and if someone says 'No, leave that', move on, try another one. And be prepared to be told off without being completely devastated. Getting things wrong is a natural, normal part of life.

*Laura:* *One of our interviewees from Cornwall said, 'It's just like anything: if you encounter another culture and you don't know what to do, someone will tell you if you get it wrong'. Of course that's true, but when there are narratives that position one group is like this and another one's like that, it could so easily tip over into divisive assumptions about the 'out-group' being reinforced. So even something that's actually quite small, I wonder whether sometimes the stakes are higher; either for a newcomer wanting to integrate, or for a broader cultural relationality?*

*Brian:* But that phrase 'wanting to integrate' is interesting, because it's very hard to get away from an acquisitive drive. Someone might want to be as good at speaking te reo Māori as they possibly can be. But why? What's wrong with being *quite* good? You don't have to be an expert. Where's that

acquisitive drive coming from? It's coming a Western capitalist society, it's inculcated.

*Laura:* Yes, absolutely – I can relate to that in my own learning of Cornish. So for an incomer, one trying to reconcile that drive with the very emotive, embodied and meaningful relation to encountering a culture that you mentioned earlier, how might they go about reconciling those two perspectives?

*Brian:* Te reo Māori is the indigenous language, the language of this *land*. And if I intend to be part of this land, then I should be able to speak the language of the land. You have to think with a different world view to speak a different language, especially one as different to English as te reo is. The way it thinks about things in the world is completely different. Te reo Māori is actually a language that still carries that older Aotearoa that used to be here. So the sounds of language don't come from *this* land we have now, they come from the rainforest-covered Aotearoa that used to exist. And learning it, there's a deep emotional, bodily connection. That connection is to the land that *should* be there, not the one that is. And in a sense that's the same sort of feeling that I have about Māori, is that it's actually re-emerging, but it's the world that should be here. So there's this curious connection with that emergence, but also the *future* country that I hope it will be here. Maybe in another 200 years. But at the same time, as we wrote in our article on learning te reo,<sup>2</sup> Pania speaks Māori and I don't. And that's getting at this understanding that to speak a language, you need to be in, to position yourself in, that world as much as you can. But languages tend to get reduced to a code to communicate with someone else in that language. And if you think of it like that, it doesn't change you. You just change the sounds that are coming out of your mouth. But if you think that you speak yourself in a world through language, then the fact that I'm not Māori creates a sense in which I can *never* speak Māori - but Pania is speaking automatically from her Māori life and existence. So I think it would be helpful for outsiders to remember that.

*Laura:* What are the implications of this on the resilience of the culture? Can outsiders ever become what UNESCO would call 'culture bearers', or does that positionality inherently mean they will always, to some extent, be outside?

*Ayano:* In my grandparents' time, Okinawans were punished for speaking the Okinawan language. But outside the institutionalised Japanese space such as school, they spoke Okinawan all the time. I grew up in an environment where my grandparents and parents spoke in Okinawan. When my grandparents passed away, I could only occasionally hear my parents speak to each other in Okinawan. I love the sound and relationalities and histories and ancestral connections it brings so I made an effort to speak in Okinawan whenever I had a chance with my parents. There are certain words that are untranslatable to Japanese and we use them in Japanese sentences. Now that there is government initiatives for language

revitalisation in Okinawa, we have events, books and dictionaries to actively learn. We have so many aspects of culture that are traditionally and uniquely Okinawan. So for example, pottery, or Ryukyu dance. But we don't always have Okinawan-born people to inherit them, so mainland Japanese people – or even non-Japanese people – take it on.

*Laura:* *So is it actually a key means of securing the culture's resilience that they do get involved, in the sense that there aren't enough Okinawan people to carry it on otherwise?*

*Ayano:* It is an important question. We haven't sufficiently addressed the issue of *how* traditions have to be passed down to non-Okinawans, whether they have an common mutual understanding of the importance and the value of the culture. To address that issue, we may have to also consider what makes a certain cultural aspect Okinawan. Younger people are trying different approaches. I was speaking to some people in their 20s who offer peace education. They offer guided tours to students from mainland Japan and they are interested in how to encourage mainland Japanese people to learn Okinawan history, developing a creative approach to that. There are many colleagues at my university who are from other prefectures or other parts of the world. They teach Okinawan issues too, or work with Okinawan nature and culture. Many scholars contribute to understanding this place, island cultures, and indigenous epistemologies, and their relations to the rest of the world. We have a traditional Okinawan guitar. It's made of snakeskin and it's different to the Japanese one. The Master guitar-maker was happy to pass the skill on to an Okinawan American. He struggled to learn – but what was important for him is that the knowledge was passed on to somebody who was *willing* to learn with respect to the heritage.

*Laura:* *So even if it is only a means to an end, there could be an intermediate role that outsiders can play, at least in creating a vitality around the culture that could mean it can be passed on in the future?*

*Ayano:* As an Okinawan, I'm appreciative of people who inherit our culture, even non-Okinawans, if they pay respect and care into the history and epistemologies in our culture. Otherwise, it's going to be extinct. I appreciate it, but I'm also curious about *how* they relate to our culture, people and place. For example, a lot of people are adapting traditional houses, keeping the unique Okinawan architecture on the outside and then renovating the interior as restaurants where they offer Okinawan dishes or modern version of it, or fusions of multiple world cuisines. I think that's an interesting way to preserve Okinawan architecture as well as food. Culture's not static and we are agents of cultural process. But the process needs to be paid attention to. Okinawan culture is also diverse, not monolithic. As an independent kingdom, the Ryukyu served as a cultural intersection in the Asia Pacific. As a colonial legacy, we have a deep US culture, too. These are areas that used to be districts for US soldiers, residents, that are now owned by local residents or the municipalities, or non-profit

organisations. Some of them are rented or resided in by locals and non-locals alike. Some are open to entrepreneurs from other places. I'm curious about the roots and routes of those people who are starting a new business in Okinawa: Are they respectful to the culture, nature, history, people of our place?

*Laura: So it sounds like there's something important here about intentionality, about orientation towards the minority culture...*

*Brian: I'm quite uneasy about a sudden interest by non-Māori, mostly pākehā, White New Zealanders in learning te reo Māori. There are a lot of provisions in the country for people to learn te reo, and many of them are free. But they're full of pākehā. Māori don't go to them. Why is it suddenly cool to speak Māori, when ten, twenty years ago, it was seen to be a useless language? When I started learning te reo Māori I admit that some of my motivations for doing that were not 'honourable', for want of a better word. There isn't a single reason I learnt it, but one of them was to give myself a sort of distinction. There were not very many pākehā who could speak te reo. So I've got this sort of uneasiness about why it's suddenly 'cool', as actually it's economically valuable now. There's an activist called Moana Jackson who passed away a few years ago, who used the phrase 'repowering' rather than 'revitalisation'. So I prefer this 'repowering' of Māori. For a language and culture to be to be revitalised, there has to be the growth of an economy as well, and that is happening. In terms of gross domestic product, a significant part of that is Māori, generated from Māori land, from Māori businesses. And I think that's in the mix there, about why people are saying 'Maybe I should learn te reo now'.*

*Laura: So that 'repowering' is about bringing together different domains of society, and that's what gives it that resilience. In terms of people's motivations, then, what would you say to someone moving to New Zealand: how can they ethically orientate themselves towards the language, towards the culture?*

*Brian: For me, it's a given that this is Māori land, this is a Māori country. Te Tiriti basically promised that there would be Māori sovereignty and pākehā sovereignty over their own resources and people. And it became pākehā just dominating everything. But if you can return to the idea that actually Māori are the sovereign people of this land and relate to that sovereignty, and even though you might think it's imaginary (which I don't think it is), then it's a question of: so how would you learn a language of the sovereign people of this land? And it's *through them*. So you have to go to them. It's not about the language in the first instance, it's nothing to do with the language, actually. It's about connecting with the Māori community, with the hidden country that's always there, just under the surface. Scratch New Zealand away and you meet Aotearoa. So if you can connect with the people of Aotearoa, through those connections some way will present itself for you acquiring the language....*

*Pania*: ...acquiring the language over time, along with the culture. And being prepared to be part of the culture. A Māori panellist was asked by some students, 'So how do we learn about Māori?' And he said, 'Well, you can't learn *about* it. If you really want to be, understand, and know, then you have to be in it'. You have to do the gentle work of *being* in it. Living in it, being part of it, and I think what was powerful about what Brian said is that notion that we call *rangatira ki te rangatira: chief to chief*. So a child who walks in the room is a rangatira. You also are a rangatira. When you meet on that level as chief to chief, *then* you're getting it right.

## Notes

- 1 Stewart G (2021) 'A passion for ignorance? Not knowing the half of it' *PESA Agora*. Available at <https://pesaagora.com/columns/a-passion-for-ignorance>.
- 2 Tweed B and Te Maro P (2023) 'A growing number of non-Māori New Zealanders are embracing learning te reo – but there's more to it than language' *The Conversation* 2 February 2023. Available at <https://theconversation.com/a-growing-number-of-non-maori-new-zealanders-are-embracing-learning-te-reo-but-theres-more-to-it-than-language-198154>.

## 14 Revoicing cultural landscapes

### Towards resilient intangible cultural heritage and positive social relations

*Laura Hodsdon, Valts Ernštreits,  
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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

these complex heritage contexts. We call this capacity *heritage literacy*<sup>1</sup>: 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 Korinik & 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](http://www.libiesugads.lv)) reformed 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 to 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 Klewweyek Kernow*, or *Cornish Audio-Visual Archive Charter*, which is freely available online at [cornishavarchivecharter.com](http://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 preservationist 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 supra-national 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 Kutma 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 de-centring 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 insidership 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 outsidership 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 bounded 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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# Appendix 1

## The case study events

### Cornish, United Kingdom

#### *May Day, Padstow*

Padstow's May Day has been described as the oldest living folk festival in Europe. Two separate groups, the red 'Original Old Oss' and the 'Blue Ribbon Oss' (or 'Peace Oss'), self-fund and organise the event. Despite the dispersal of Padstonians outside the town itself, indeed around the globe, May Day continues to thrive. On May Day, 'Mayers' (Padstonians who celebrate May Day) wear white with neckerchiefs and ribbons in their party's red or blue colours, and walk, dance, play drums and accordions and sing while processing through the town's streets with the Osses (large, black-costumed characters) that come out of their 'stables' (two buildings co-opted for the occasion) to be 'teazed' with a dancer holding a club. Although there has been evolution over time, the event has a continuous lineage broken only by COVID-19 lockdowns. We collected data at the 2022 event.

#### *Golowan, Penzance*

Golowan is a traditional festival held in Penzance, in the far south-west of Cornwall, every midsummer, and we collected data at the 2022 event. It initially waned in the late-19th century, but was revived in 1991 by a group of artists; the current event is a reimagined version of the ancient festival of the same name. The event combines a Christian and pagan lineage: meaning 'Feast of St John' in Kernewek, the Cornish language, Golowan is a week-long event culminating on Mazey Day, the nearest Saturday to midsummer eve. On Mazey Day, there are food and craft stalls, bands, and local schoolchildren make costumes, banners, and gigantic papier mâché creations that are carried in a procession through the streets. In these processions, an *Oss* (*horse*) named Penglaz can also be seen: a horse skull in a flower crown and long, tattered robes, that dances with a *teazer*, a costumed dancer with a tambourine. At varying points, participants form a skipping and hopping human chain to perform the 'Serpent Dance', unique to Penzance as it was reimagined based on archival research upon the revitalisation of the event. Some of our respondents also allude to the Montol festival, which was not a formal case study but is the winter solstice counterpart to Golowan.

*International Mining and Pasty Festival, Redruth*

The Redruth International Mining and Pasty Festival was begun in 2008 as a result of a partnership with a diasporic Mexican pasty maker, and combines activities relating to the area's rich mining heritage with celebrations of the Cornish pasty, including a pasty-making competition. In our data collection year, the event was cancelled due to the death of Queen Elizabeth II the day before, and the smaller dataset is drawn from stakeholder interviews with organisers prior to the cancellation and field interviews at a smaller ('Bite Size') rearranged version of the event in October 2022.

**Livonian, Latvia and Estonia***Livonian Festival*

The Livonian Festival has long been the most important event in Livonian cultural life and has taken place in the village of Mazirbe on the Livonian Coast in Latvia every year since 1989. As well as exhibitions, discussions, and book presentations, there is a market selling handicrafts and traditional Livonian foods such as carrot pies (*sūr kak*) and smoked fish; there is also a procession to the shore to offer a garland to the Sea Mother, an important figure in Livonian mythology, and a bonfire on the shore, both accompanied by songs in Livonian. The Festival is connected with an annual summer camp for Livonian youth.

**Frisian, the Netherlands***It Gelok fan Fryslân (Frisia's Happiness)*

Although Tryater theatre company's home is Frisia's capital Leeuwarden, *It Gelok fan Fryslân* was staged in a number of villages around the province. We collected data during the staging in the village of Kollum in September 2021. Starting from the seemingly paradoxical fact that Frisians, according to a recent national survey, are the happiest people in the Netherlands, despite Frisia being a relatively poor part of the country, Tryater asked villagers around Frisia to write down what makes them happy. This resulted in an audio-tour where people could hear the texts written by villagers being spoken, and an installation with a poem based on the texts written by poet Sytse Jansma.

*It Deiboek fan Anne Frank (The Diary of Anne Frank)*

*It Deiboek fan Anne Frank* was an adaptation in Frisian of the English play, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, itself based on the famous wartime diary. It was performed in April–May 2022 in a community centre in Toppenhuzen en Twellingea – often shortened to Top en Twel – a village of 1600 inhabitants. Like many Frisian villages, Top en Twel has its own amateur theatre association: Fordivedaesje Top en Twel, established in 1977. Its motto, 'for the village and with the village', shows

how strongly the association is connected to the local community. There is a strong preference for plays that provide the younger generation of the village with an opportunity to get involved. *It Deiboek fan Anne Frank*, with five performances, rather than the usual two, and a professional director, rather than someone selected from the association's own ranks, was a larger production than usual for the association, as it was originally meant to mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands from German occupation in 2020, postponed to 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Under Wetter (Under Water)*

Also by Tryater, *Under Wetter* was performed in May and June 2022 on the ice-skating rink of Werga, a village with 1839 inhabitants near Tryater's home base Leeuwarden. As a site-specific, outdoor production, *Under Wetter* resembled in many ways an iepenloftspul. For instance, amateur actors and volunteers were involved, and Tryater collaborated with local businesses. However, the play was also clearly produced by a professional company: it had high production values and quality technical design, included a collaboration with professional dance company Ivgi & Greben, and involved professional actors and theatre makers. *Under Wetter* was an original play, written by young Frisian author Wessel de Vries.

*De Jacht (The Hunt)*

*De Jacht (The Hunt)* was performed in September 2022 in Jorwert. This was that year's edition of one of Frisia's most well-known iepenloftspullen, an annual event staged by *Stifting Iepenloft Jorwert (Open Air Jorwert Foundation)*. This foundation employs several professionals, such as directors and technicians, but its performances mainly feature amateur actors and the event as a whole relies above all on a volunteer base of over a hundred individuals from in and around the village. Thus, Iepenloft Jorwert can be seen as a semi-professional organisation. Established in 1954, it is also one of the oldest theatre companies in Frisia and represents a long-standing tradition of Frisian-spoken, open-air theatre. *De Jacht* was based on the successful Danish movie *Jagten (2012)* by Thomas Vinterberg, which explores themes of small-community dynamics. Its setting was changed to a Frisian village, to fit the context of the performance.

# Appendix 2

## Methodology

The project’s methodological approach was holistic and interdisciplinary – but to contain the scope of data collection within the project, we focused our inquiry on live cultural events linked to the past identity practices of a national minority culture.

Data collection took place in an ethnographic framework, comprising opportunity sample field interviews with a range of attendees at case study events, purposive sample 1:1 semi-structured interviews with individuals and stakeholders related to the events themselves or with the minority culture more broadly, observational field notes, photographs, and films and sound, and analysis of other text and image including audio-visual archive material, websites, and policy documents. Interviews were conducted in English, Latvian, or Estonian as relevant to the country of the event and, in the Netherlands, roughly two-thirds of the interviews were conducted in Frisian, the rest in Dutch. Raw data was coded, then translated into English. The final dataset comprised  $N = 294$ .

Tables A2.1–A2.4 set out participant identification codes relative to selected demographic information. These codes are attributed to quotations from the dataset throughout the volume, with the prefix K for Cornwall, F for Frisia, L for Latvia, and E for Estonia, followed by the participant number.

Other information (such as gender and age) was collected, but we include here only information relevant to the interviewee’s position relative to the ICH being discussed. Each region approached its demographic collection slightly differently as was most appropriate for its context. Some data is missing, as indicated by a blank cell. ID codes are non-consecutive since we only include here those interview respondents who are quoted in this book.

*Table A2.1* Frisia ( $N = 115$ )

<i>ID code</i>	<i>Relation to Frisia</i>	<i>Participation in ICH</i>
F2	Lived in Frisia >30 years	Visitor/spectator
F9	Lived in Frisia >30 years	Visitor/spectator
F10	Lived in Frisia >30 years	Visitor/spectator
F15	Born in Frisia	Visitor/spectator
F23	Born in Frisia	Visitor/spectator

*(Continued)*

Table A2.1 (Continued)

<i>ID code</i>	<i>Relation to Frisia</i>	<i>Participation in ICH</i>
F28	Family from Frisia, born Frisian and lived there longer than 30 years	Visitor/spectator/inhabitant
F29		Visitor/spectator/inhabitant
F30	Lived in Frisia >30 years; feels Frisian	Organiser Inhabitant Spectator
F31	Born in Frisia	Spectator Spectator Bartender
F33	Born in Frisia	Visitor/spectator
F37	Born in Frisia	Journalist/writer
F39	Born in Frisia	Director
F40	Visitor from Amsterdam	Visitor/spectator
F41	Actor, Frisian	Actor
F43		Former actor/spectator Volunteer
F45	Visitor	Visitor/spectator
F46	Frisian	Actor
F47	Frisian	Actor/organizer
F48	Frisian	Actor/organizer
F50	Lived in Frisia <30 years	Visitor/spectator
F59	Born in Frisia	Visitor/spectator
F63		Director
F64	Lived in Frisia >30 years	Spectator Translator/writer
F65	Lived in Frisia >30 years	Spectator
F66	Born in Frisia	Organiser
F72	Born in Frisia	Actor
F74		Visitor/spectator
F76	Born in Frisia	Spectator Volunteer
F78	Works in in Frisia	Stakeholder
F80	Born in in Frisia but does not feel Frisian	Inhabitant
F88	Born in Frisia	Visitor/spectator
F96	Born in Frisia	Volunteer
F98	Born in Frisia	Visitor/spectator
F100	Lived in Frisia >30 years	Organiser
F102	Born in Frisia	Director
F103	Lived in Frisia <30 years	Visitor/spectator
F104	Born in Frisia	Organiser
F105	Born in Frisia	Visitor/spectator
F106	Born in Frisia, feels Dutch	Visitor/spectator
F107	Born in in Frisia, lived in Groningen, now back in in Frisia	Visitor/spectator
F108	Lived in Frisia >30 years	Organiser
F111		Theatre advisor
F112	Born in Frisia	Actor
F113	Born in Amsterdam, has always spoken Frisian, Lived in Frisia >30 years	Actor
F114	Born in Frisia	Café owner

Table A2.2 Cornwall (N = 94)

<i>ID Code</i>	<i>Cornwall Resident</i>	<i>Relation to Cornwall</i>	<i>Reason for visit (if not resident) or relation to ICH (if resident)</i>
K5	No		Tourist
K7	Yes	Born	Attending/participating in event
K8	No		Visiting family
K13	No		Second home
K17	No		Tourist
K28	No		Tourist
K29	No		Second home
K32	Yes	Moved to Cornwall as an adult	Attending/participating in event
K36	Yes	Grew up in Cornwall	Attending/participating in event
K39	Yes	Moved to Cornwall as an adult	Attending/participating in event
K41	Yes	Born and grew up in Cornwall	Attending/participating in event
K45	No		Tourist
K52	Yes	Born and grew up in Cornwall	Attending/participating in event
K62	Yes	Born and grew up in Cornwall	Attending/participating in event
K66	Yes	Moved to Cornwall as an adult	Attending/participating in event
K70	Yes	Moved to Cornwall as an adult	Attending/participating in event
K72	No		Tourist
K77	Yes	Born and grew up in Cornwall	Stakeholder
K78	Yes	Born and grew up in Cornwall	Event insider
K79	Yes	Moved to Cornwall as an adult	Event insider
K80	Yes	Moved to Cornwall as an adult	Event insider
K81	Yes	Born and grew up in Cornwall (but not Penzance)	Event insider
K82	Yes	Moved to Cornwall as an adult	Event insider
K83	Yes	Born and grew up in Cornwall	Event insider
K84	Yes	Born and grew up in Cornwall	Event insider
K85	Yes	Born and grew up in Cornwall	Event insider
K86	Yes	Born and grew up in Cornwall	Event insider
K87	Yes	Born and grew up in Cornwall	Event insider
K88	Yes	Born and grew up in Cornwall	Event insider
K89	Yes	Moved to Cornwall as an adult – long-term resident	Stakeholder
K90	Yes	Moved to Cornwall as an adult – short-term resident	Stakeholder
K91	Yes	Born and grew up in Cornwall	Stakeholder
K92	Yes	Born and grew up in Cornwall	Stakeholder
K93	Yes	Moved to Cornwall as an adult	
K94	Yes	Born and grew up in Cornwall	

*Table A2.3* Livonian – Estonia (*N* = 10)

<i>ID code</i>	<i>Identifies as Livonian</i>	<i>Relation to Livonian</i>
E1	No	Interested in Livonian ICH as commodity; organizer, stakeholder
E2	No	Interested in history; organiser, stakeholder
E3	No	Interested in history; organiser, stakeholder
E4	No	Interested in Livonian as Finnic language; director/artist
E9	No	Interested in municipal development; stakeholder

*Table A2.4* Livonian – Latvia (*N* = 75)

<i>ID Code</i>	<i>Identifies as Livonian?</i>	<i>Relationship to Livonian</i>
L1	Yes	Researcher of Livonian history
L2	Yes	Musician
L3		Manager of company on Livonian Coast
L4	Yes	Member of the Ventspils branch of Livonian Union
L5	Yes	Livonian speaker and teacher
L6	Yes	Musician, owner of guest house on Livonian Coast
L8		Member of the Ventspils branch of Livonian Union
L13		Organiser of Kolka Livonian Festival
L14	Yes	Member of Livonian Union
L15	Yes	Choir leader
L16	Yes	Organiser of Livonian children's camp 'Mierlinkizt'
L17	Yes	Actor, director, founder of theatre group
L23	No	Married to Livonian
L24	Yes	Owner of guest house on Livonian Coast
L26		Livonian teacher, member of Livlist ensemble
L27	Yes	
L28		Married to Livonian
L29	Yes	
L33	No	Group of three people, moved to Livonian Coast in 2004
L36	Yes	Uncles and aunts spoke Livonian
L37	No	
L39		Six family members from Pitragš
L43	Yes	
L44	Yes	Son of Livonians, owner of horn collection
L45	Yes	Coastal fisherman
L49		Artist, moved from Riga 30 years ago
L51		Group of three people, moved to Livonian Coast in 2004
L53		
L54	No	Dutch owner of homestead on Livonian Coast since 2020
L56		
L57	Yes	Deputy of Talsi Municipality
L58		
L59		Deputy of Talsi Municipality
L61		
L62		
L63		Member of Regional Administration of the Nature Protection Board, works at Slitere National Park
L72		

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