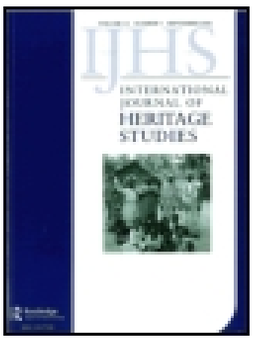
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Building a bridge: opportunities and challenges for intangible cultural heritage at the intersection of institutions, civic society, and migrant communities

Danilo Giglitto [a], Luigina Ciolfi [b] and Wolfgang Bosswick [c]

[a]Centre for Culture, Media and Society, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, United Kingdom; [b]School of Applied Psychology, University College Cork, Cork, Ireland; [c]Geographical Research on Migration and Transition, University of Bamberg, Bamberg, Germany

ABSTRACT

This article explores the needs and expectations of migrant and refugee communities in several European countries in relation to communicating and sharing their intangible cultural heritage (ICH) practices, and of cultural and civic institutions that plan to support this. Based on two empirical studies, we report on the perspectives of cultural institutions, NGOs that are active in cultural work, and representatives of migrant and refugee communities. This work sheds some light on the complex relationship between migrant communities and institutions with regard to ICH, and identifies the gaps and differences between these perspectives so as to produce guidelines and recommendations on how to bridge grassroots' interests in ICH and cultural institutions, as well as organisations engaged in cultural work with migrant and refugee communities. The overall goal is to address the under-representation and marginalisation of many migrant and refugee communities in cultural heritage participation, production, and safeguarding and to propose ways to activate the potential of ICH.

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1. Introduction

Since its official recognition and definition in 2003 (UNESCO 2003), the concept of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) has gained traction academically and institutionally, and also at grassroots level, where groups around the world have partaken in community-based projects for taking care of their ICH (Robertson 2012; Smith and Waterton 2013). The discourse around ICH has given increasing centrality to all those aspects that inextricably link it with human activities and perceptions. ICH is all about people and, as such, it is fluid, continuously negotiated, and inherently contested, and it relies on complex social processes and political actions to 'stay alive' (Smith and Akagawa 2009). The idea of ICH and its inherent mobility and transformative and dynamic potential attracted scholarly interest, with studies of ICH in relation to migratory flows and statuses (Amescua 2013; Machuca 2011). However, despite the recognition of ICH as a key community-building factor for migrants in their receiving localities (Vukov and Matanova 2017; Yankova 2017), the relationship between ICH and migration requires further exploration, especially regarding the crucial role that institutional actors can play in establishing good practices. Even in the field of critical heritage studies, which explores the relationships between people, heritage, and power, the focus on the history of migration is less pronounced; notwithstanding, growing research is

CONTACT Danilo Giglitto d.giglitto@shu.ac.uk Centre for Culture, Media and Society, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, United Kingdom

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exploring ways of challenging official heritage by investigating the politics of race and diversity, and encouraging collaboration in diasporic heritage practices (Dellios and Henrich 2021; Gouriévidis 2014).

It is also worth noting a convergence on the institutional side, whereby more and more local, national, and international public bodies as well as non-profit organisations (such as NGOs) are challenging themselves to explore cultural heritage (CH) as an arena to pursue social innovation and inclusion (Amescua 2013; Innocenti 2016), while cultural institutions have been working to expand their civic role in ways that might benefit migrant and refugee communities (Sandell 2002; Simon 2016). These trends are fast-paced but go through a non-straightforward path. This article aims at contributing to these debates by providing a set of empirically-based guidelines and recommendations. It will explore existing conceptualisations around ICH and migration, before focusing on the significance that ICH can hold for people and institutions entangled in migration-related issues.

1.1. ICH and migration

ICH 'refers to the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and know-how, transmitted from generation to generation within communities' (UNESCO 2003, 4). As such, it is inextricably linked to the community that bears it. The crucial role that communities play in ICH identification, safeguarding, and reproduction is codified institutionally (UNESCO 2003), explored academically (Bak 2018; Robertson 2012), and frequently practised in community-based endeavours that may or may not involve digital technologies Flinn, Stevens, and Shepherd 2009; Giglitto, Lazem, and Preston 2019b). The same level of attention, however, has not been dedicated to exploring ICH in relation to migration, despite its importance in the lives and experiences of migrants. The wealth of literature on migration tends to overlook its cultural heritage aspects (Levitt 2005), while research on ICH should pay more attention to displaced communities as well as the essential role (that can be) played by NGOs and CSOs. These oversights need addressing as – according to the International Organization for Migration – 272 million globally, accounting for 3.5% of the worldwide population, are migrants, already overcoming previously established projections for the year 2050 while at least 79.5 million have been forcibly displaced as per an estimation made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 2020.

Studying ICH in relation to migration is complex, demanding of several dimensions that are difficult to cluster and analyse holistically. As argued by Amescua (2013), the relationship between ICH and migration might be even defined as paradoxical, in that there are conflicting reports on whether people's mobility can be detrimental or beneficial to the flourishing of ICH. An example of negative impact can be found in Machuca (2011), who mentions migratory processes and globalisation as disrupting the continuity of cultural practices. Similarly, the abandonment of traditions and ancient skills can be observed even in the case of intra-national, short-distance movements. For instance, the Bedouins of North-Central Egypt lament a weakening of their distinctive cultural practices as members of their society leave relatively remote settlements to mingle more and more with the wider, more urban, Egyptian society (Giglitto, Lazem, and Preston 2019b). As migration is a phenomenon generally interesting more the younger generations, the disruption of ICH transmission due to migration is tightly interwoven also with the cultural generational gap that seems to occur across cultures and borders. This gap is identified as frequently obstructing ICH reproduction and safeguarding, and it is based on a mismatch of cultural interests between younger and older generations, sometimes further exacerbated when digital technologies are deployed in ICH-related endeavours (Giglitto 2017).

While emigrating flows from culturally and geographically distinctive places can diminish the poignancy and sharpness of socio-cultural practices whose survival is relying on transmission and practical rehearsal, there is another side to be considered. Cultural manifestations can be reconstructed out of cultural contacts in receiving localities (Le Bot 2011) and are 'a major factor in the formation and consolidation of immigrant communities' (Vukov and Matanova 2017, 9). This

suggests that ICH can be of great significance for migrant and refugee communities, their identity, sense of cohesion, and wellbeing.

1.2. Significance of ICH for migrant and refugee communities

The history of human migration shows that people may be willing to maintain some form of closeness with the heritage of origin by keeping up the practising of social, cultural, or religious manifestations in receiving localities. This is observable in many migratory trends occurring in Europe, where people, although settled in a host county, tend to live trans-nationally across two countries, with strong links maintained with the homeland in terms of communication and interests in its political and social issues, and also culturally (Vlaskina 2017). CH can play an important role in perpetuating such connections, and it is not rare that 'as the living conditions in a new place stabilise, income and stability make it possible to transport artefacts from the homeland that carry an identity value and to bring these to the new country of residence' (Vlaskina 2017, 43). ICH such as folklore can be 're-traditionalised' – i.e. revitalised after being lost due to direct or indirect consequences of migration – by migrant communities to foster a sense of commonality and to strengthen community ties (Yankova 2017).

Promoting the safeguarding of minorities' ICH requires the articulation of what is at stake when ICH is eroded (Seglow 2019). When ICH, and especially that of immigrant communities, is not supported through a systematic and coherent framework at the national level – for instance, in the case of the USA[1] – it risks being streamlined in a commodified version (i.e. for the tourist gaze) losing its authenticity in the process, rather than being safeguarded within a 'coherent, systematic, national approach' (Margolies 2011, 29). Furthermore, evidence suggests that the ICH of immigrants can stimulate meaningful dialogue with native and settled people and educate and inform them on migration-related issues, as well as other cultures. For example, we can infer that a systematic and sensitive representation of oral traditions and life stories in receiving countries' museums and exhibitions could provide opportunities for empathising with migrants' personal stories and fostering intercultural understanding (Vlachaki 2007). The influences of immigrant minorities on cultural institutions can not only boost their mission but also enhance the social and economic development of the locale they reside in (Bitsani 2016). An analysis of the cultural practices of the African peoples who were forcibly transported to the Caribbean suggests that the preservation and transmission of ICH manifestations such as storytelling and proverbs supported a better definition of interpersonal relations, the creation of rites of passages underlying a promise of hope, and the transmission of traditional medicine knowledge to stay healthy (Nettleford 2004). Seglow (2019) draws similar conclusions as Vlachaki (2007), arguing however that typically acknowledged benefits such as strengthening collective identity are not exclusively provided by activities around ICH safeguarding,[2] and they also face the drawbacks of potentially not being recognised as valuable in some positions of the political spectrum. The premise for safeguarding immigrants' ICH should instead lie in its enabling of minorities to counteract their invisibilisation in the official heritage discourse (Smith 2006), by encouraging the inclusion of groups holding distinct cultural identities in the wider historical narrative in which they play a role (Seglow 2019).

The interdependence between migrating and establishing some cultural continuity manifests itself even more when looking at people that have resisted coercive assimilation processes. One instance is the case of the Russian Old Believers originating from Southern Russia. During the last three centuries, they escaped persecution by both the Russian state and Church, and settled in various European areas to safeguard their customs and culture (Vlaskina 2017). Because of its tight connection with identity and community cohesion, the very inception of ICH as an institutionalised concept sparked discussion around whether access to CH should be considered a human right, which could have huge significance for displaced communities. In fact, the lack of official recognition of ICH by the receiving country's institutions might have effects beyond the heritage side, as

shown, for instance, by the case of the Glasgow Bajuni,[3] who cannot avail of forms of cultural protection as the United Kingdom has not ratified the 2003 ICH Convention (Hill, Craith, and Clopot 2018).

Despite its significance for migrant and displaced communities, ICH is not equated to its tangible counterparts. While the damage to tangible CH such as monuments, buildings, and artefacts during natural disasters or conflicts is usually accompanied by dismay and global condemnation, ICH does not usually garner the same consideration. However, crises heavily affect ICH as well, by upsetting the cultural and social fabric of communities (Chatelard and Kassab-Hassan 2017). A 2017 UNESCO survey of displaced Syrians reports that while ICH plays a crucial role in terms of psychological and social support, more work 'is needed to ensure the continued transmission of ICH in the particular circumstances of displacement' (Chatelard and Kassab-Hassan 2017, 4). If we accept that ICH positively affects the living conditions of migrant communities (including refugees and asylum seekers), then cultural institutions and associations, civil society organisations (CSOs), NGOs, and other relevant agencies could and should all contribute to this process in their institutional capacity, despite certain challenges.

1.3. The institutional side

The ambivalent role of migratory flows in relation to ICH is contextually and historically determined. While there are instances of thriving cultural continuity tying back to the places of origins, clinical research warns that the possible grief stemming from losing connection with one's culture can degenerate into distressing situations such as cultural bereavement[4] and identity crisis (Bhugra and Becker 2005; Eisenbruch 1991) and, as such, need addressing. The crisis of continuity of cultural practices and the loss of distinctiveness due to migration is also recognised at the institutional level. Amescua (2013) suggests that some candidatures for inclusion in UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity are motivated by the endangering factors of emigration, i.e. numerically decreasing ICH gatekeepers and knowledge holders.

Large heritage organisations and administrative bodies have also worked towards improving the situation at the receiving end of migratory flows. The International Council on Monuments and Sites contributed to the challenges of community displacements by issuing an open request to heritage practitioners to share best practices and expertise relevant to the idea – among others – of exploring cultural heritage as a tool for integration and social cohesion amidst relocation, and of safeguarding the ICH of the displaced (Herrmann 2017). Since 2015, the European Commission deems the promotion of cultural diversity in Europe a priority, and has established an Open Method of Coordination working group focusing on how culture can 'foster social inclusion, intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity' (European Commission 2017, 6). Simultaneously, the UNESCO procedures for tangible and intangible heritage recognition are being challenged in favour of broader ideas of heritage that could, for instance, recognise the 'permanent temporality' of refugee camps (Hochberg 2020, 45).

While ongoing dialogue at the institutional level is trying to identify the correct vehicles for change, cultural bodies are exploring ways to enhance their societal role in light of these phenomena. The sector experiences a wave of experimentation with participatory approaches for increasing and, more importantly, diversifying the audiences they aim to engage. The focus switched to traditionally, even if not always deliberately, excluded communities such as immigrants, who might think that museums are not places for them (Simon 2016). In practice, this paradigmatic shift means cultural institutions moving to, directly or indirectly, explore the connections between migration and CH through tackling real-world issues such as racism and the subjugation and marginalisation of minorities (Sandell 2002). However, diversifying audiences carries less value if not accompanied by expanding the cultural representation usually held in museums. The efforts in this direction are increasing. The main approach by cultural institutions in this regard seems to be

participatory and design-based methods, which have been proved to provide a framework for entangling the trauma of refugees (Brown and Choi 2018) and facilitating contributions from groups that are often excluded from representation in official archives (Clarke et al. 2016).

In their quest to become more inclusive, polyvocal, and socially responsible – which could mean getting ready for the challenges that the recognition of 'other' ICH entails – cultural institutions are thus challenged to reconsider their practices. Challenges arise from listening to new voices and negotiating the roles and motivations of participants. Furthermore, additional challenges might stem from the demanding nature of facilitating participatory processes in the long term (Simonsen and Robertson 2013) and the exclusionary dimension of heritage, as even when heritage might be inclusive of an individual or a community, it will always be exclusionary of another (Smith 2011). To address these challenges, we propose guidelines and recommendations that might help to better tackle issues related to ICH and migration.

2. Methodology

The research this article reports employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. It was carried out in the collaborative CultureLabs European project[5] and aimed at surveying communities' needs in relation to living heritage practices. The investigation was led by two institutions in Germany and Italy, and, to capture a wider scenario at European level, other institutions in the project also supported the study recruitment, with interviews and survey responses relating to the countries targeted by the project team's collaborative efforts. The data sets therefore reflect the geographical makeup of the project team and their outreach networks.

The quantitative data was gathered through a survey aimed at members of various migrant and refugee communities. Its goal was to generate several independent variables giving structured insights in relation to CH-related interests and needs. The qualitative data arises from semi-structured in-depth interviews with other migrants and refugees, as well as with representatives from the professional cultural sector, and from NGOs that are active in cultural work with migrants and refugees.

2.1. Terminology

Before outlining our methodological framework, we clarify how the terms 'migrant' and 'refugee' are used hereinafter, given the complex semantic and legal dimensions associated with this terminology. The migrants participating in the survey and interviews are defined according to the common lay understanding of a person who moved away from their place of usual residence across an international border, temporarily or permanently. Based on the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, refugees are people who, owing to the fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, political opinion, etc., are outside the country of their nationality and are unable or unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country; refugees may also be people who do not have a nationality and are unable or unwilling to return to the country of their former habitual residence due to crises or fear of persecution. For brevity, in this paper 'asylum seekers' are included under the umbrella term of 'refugees'. Therefore, the refugees participating in our research include both individuals that have been granted refugee status and individuals that are waiting decision on refugee status or admission on humanitarian grounds.

Each of the two terms might encompass diverse circumstances and living conditions that may inadvertently lead to unwarranted generalisations. For this reason, particular attention has been paid to various indicators of precarious living conditions and stress factors, in order to properly contextualise any emerging patterns.

Table 1. Country of residence.

Country	Number
Italy	54
Germany	31
UK	8
USA	1
Sweden	1
Senegal	1
Netherlands	1
Ireland	1
Greece	1
Finland	1
Czech Republic	1
Total	101

Table 2. Country of origin

Country	Number
Afghanistan	1
Albania	1
Bangladesh	35
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1
Burma	1
Caribbean	1
China	1
Croatia	1
Finland	4
France	1
Hungary	1
Iran	1
Iraq	5
Ireland	1
Italy	2
Kosovo	1
Kurdistan	1
Lebanon	1
Lithuania	1
Mali	3
Morocco	1
Myanmar	3
Netherlands	1
Nigeria	6
Pakistan	1
Poland	2
Romania	2
Russia	1
Senegal	1
Somalia	1
Sudan	2
Syria	3
Taiwan	1
Togo	1
Turkey	7
Missing	4
Total	101

2.2. Survey

101 surveys were administered to people belonging to migrant and refugee communities in several hosting countries, mostly Italy and Germany (for details see Table 1). The countries of origin of respondents covered four continents (see Table 2). 65 women, 35 men, and 1 of unknown gender answered the survey. About a quarter of the respondents has a temporary residence status, while one

third do not. This situation affects respondents with all socio-demographic backgrounds quite equally, except for age. Educational level and gender representation do not render substantially different distributions.

The survey consisted of closed-ended questions and was structured into eight thematic areas related to a balanced mix of independent and dependent variables for the generation of correlations and clusters. The thematic areas included: background information; employment status; socio-economic status; residency or migration status; individual preferences, attitudes, and activities; inter cultural awareness; extent of interest and preparedness to become actively involved in cultural activities; and access to and use of digital tools. The survey data was analysed through SPSS to generate descriptive statistics of tendency, dispersion, and distribution.

The investigation around the socio-demographic characteristics and the migration status of respondents was done to identify a possible correlation with the degree of interest and participation in cultural activities. The hypothesis revolved around the idea that, in case of precarious living circumstances, cultural activities would be considered of secondary importance in comparison to other pressing material or psychological needs. Several indicators of potential precarious conditions, as well as legal, social, and psychological stress, were identified:

- Manual labour or sales work in conjunction with sectors typically offering precarious work, such as textile and clothing industries, transport, hospitality and tourism, and personal services (housekeeping, cleaning, beauty);
- Living alone, in assigned house sharing, or in a shelter;
- Prolonged temporary residency;
- Pending decision on refugee status;
- Potentially cumulative conditions such as loneliness, health problems, problems with living in assigned housing, no permission to move out of shelters, problems with legal status, no permission to attend school or training.

The survey questions also focused on preferences, existing experiences, competences, and interest in engagement with cultural activities through the following key items:

- CH activities that are enticing to the respondents as spectators (passive consumption);
- CH activities that entice respondents to be actively engaged in them (active engagement);
- Willingness to accept more demanding forms of engagement such as ownership of CH activities in cooperation with professional institutions (co-creation); Preferred level of engagement out of the spectrum of possible forms of participation and involvement;
- Motivational factors for preferred form of engagement.

The survey data served the purpose of identifying the needs of migrants and refugees who share some characteristics, such as the difficulties they face or their living circumstances. This can lead to some interesting remarks about how informal and formal CH may be experienced by migrants and refugees, and what they might expect from it.

2.3. Interviews

27 semi-structured interviews were conducted with 18 women and 9 men. The interviewees were recruited from the collaborative network of the nine partner institutions in the CultureLabs project, depending on their availability.

Table 3 shows the breakdown of participants per category. Each category represents the role, status, or expertise for which the participants were primarily recruited. Notably, 17 of the experts were migrants themselves. Countries of origin include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Iran,

Table 3. List of interviewees (n=27)

No.	Gender	Country of origin	Category
1	M	Germany	Expert working with migrant communities
2	M	Spain	Expert on migration and social work
3	F	Germany	Expert on cultural heritage activities
4	F	Iran	Expert on migration and cultural heritage activities
5	F	Poland	Expert on empowerment of migrant organisations
6	F	Germany	Expert on promoting cultural activities
7	F	Germany	Expert on cultural work with migrants and refugees
8	F	Turkey	Expert on migrant communities and social-cultural work
9	F	Germany	Expert on cultural work with migrants and refugees
10	F	Germany	Expert on cultural work with migrants and refugees
11	M	Libya	Refugee
12	F	Bangladesh	Refugee
13	M	Nigeria	Refugee
14	F	Romania	Refugee
15	M	Nigeria	Refugee
16	F	Bangladesh	Refugee
17	M	Burkina Faso	Refugee
18	F	Nigeria	Refugee
19	F	UK	Expert on cultural heritage activities for women
20	M	UK	Expert on cultural work with refugees
21	M	Syria	Refugee and leader of a migrant organisation
22	M	Somalia	Expert working with migrant communities
23	F	Afghanistan	Expert from migrant women counselling NGO
24	F	*Unspecified*	Expert on diversity and cultural heritage
25	F	Russia	Expert on arts mediation
26	F	Somalia/Finland	Expert on migrant communities and social-cultural work
27	F	*Unspecified*	Expert on designing services for migrants

Libya, Poland, Romania, Russia, Somalia, Spain, Syria, and Turkey. Eight interviews were performed in Italy, three in the UK, ten in Germany, and six in Finland.

The interview data was analysed through content analysis and thematic analysis, principally through NVivo. Although each interview gave space to the issues raised by the interviewees, four themes emerged particularly frequently and, as such, could be deepened with the majority of participants:

- Interest in cultural activities, often serving as an introduction of the interviewees and ice-breaker;
- Expectations from cultural activities; discussion around this theme focused on the necessary supporting factors for engagement in CH, and on mutual learning when multi-cultural perspectives are involved;
- Importance of digital tools for cultural activities; this theme included discussions of possible IT solutions for supporting inclusive approaches in CH activities;
- The relevance of CH activities for individuals and for their socio-cultural integration in the host society.

These research strategies led to findings illustrating a variety of professional and/or cultural-specific perspectives that will be discussed next.

3. Perspectives, goals, challenges, and expectations

The participants have been grouped into three categories: migrants and refugees (terminology as described in the methodology section), cultural institutions, and NGOs and CSOs. The category 'cultural institutions' includes people from public or private organisations (e.g. museums, galleries,

theatres, concert halls, etc.) that are engaged in cultural activities and projects involving migrants (and other minorities) with the explicit goal to foster participation. 'NGOs and CSOs' include people from non-governmental organisations, civic society organisations, and other institutions that focus on heritage-related practices as a means to involve migrants in participatory projects to either promote intercultural activities or support diversity and inclusion.

The perspectives gathered separately for the three groups have been triangulated to create three composite scenarios taking into account viewpoints, goals, and expectations.

3.1. Cultural institutions: providing ground for participation

One thought stemming from the aggregated perspectives of cultural professionals already working with migrant and/or refugee communities is that although these communities are generally aware and proud of their ICH, they are seldom active in sharing it with the host society due to a perceived lack of interest by the latter. This represents a common source of frustration for cultural professionals, especially when their mission is mobilising CH to achieve social change and tackle prejudices and xenophobia that could potentially be found in the established audiences of their cultural venues. The institutions' challenge to overcome the communities' reluctance and to motivate them is tied to answering the fundamental question (examined by Giglitto et al. 2019a) of why underrepresented groups should care to engage: 'cultural professionals are burdened with providing grounded and convincing arguments about why community members should provide their cultural heritage representations or partaking in curatorial activities' (Giglitto et al. 2019a, 96).

Although the interviewees consider the motivation and willingness of migrants and refugees crucial to any attempt to encourage engagement, there is a great deal of uncertainty on how to foster these. Responses elaborated that the perceived scenario is even more challenging: cultural institutions are aware that the communities they try to involve are considerably diverse, internally complex, and representing a variety of views and priorities. Such complexity requires clear articulation of specific needs and expectations (rather than one-size-fits-all solutions) to be applied to partnerships with communities. As building respectful relationships is considered essential, support from professionals dealing with the welfare of migrant and/or refugees is deemed helpful. However, this leads to the issue of cultural professionals generally experiencing very few opportunities to collaborate with colleagues from the cultural sector, and even more so with other sectors (Giglitto et al. 2019a).

The particular care required for understanding cultural differences and mitigating misconceptions highlights a typical weakness from the cultural institutions' viewpoint: their own 'lack of competences and training at hand' (Interviewee 3) in approaching and involving migrant and refugee communities. Several barriers – cultural and language barriers above all – can be insurmountable without the proper skillset or professional development support. Such perceptions are aggravated by the fact that the majority of the cultural professionals voicing them have extensive experience in areas such as intercultural work with specific groups of migrants, indicating the hardships that potentially unprepared institutions such as small museums or institutions with staff that are untrained might face when pursuing inclusion policies.

3.2. NGOs and CSOs: the limits of cultural institutions and the promotion of sociocultural perspectives

The way NGOs' operators evaluate the work of cultural professionals when dealing with the engagement of migrant and refugee communities in ICH endeavours offers a different perspective. These respondents work with migrant and refugees routinely, tackling a variety of challenges – from guidance around bureaucracy to job placement, from domestic problems to mental health and loneliness.

Generally speaking, 'migrants' organisations are often not taken seriously by established cultural institutions' (Interviewee 5): their competences are usually not fully recognised and their efforts to collaborate are mostly limited to the recruitment stages, i.e. when possible participating groups are being identified. This happens despite the fact the migrants' organisations – namely, grassroots community groups led by and for migrants – could provide extremely relevant input to intercultural projects. It is accepted that the participation of migrant communities might result in a heavy workload for their volunteer members, resulting in overload without the gratification of providing meaningful inputs and of shaping intercultural projects for their full duration. The experts who are experienced in cultural work with migrants and refugees would prefer approaches from cultural institutions that strive to become aware of the state-of-the-art in intercultural work instead of 'experimenting' with the participants.

Another frequently voiced issue concerns the quality of interactions and exchange in many intercultural projects. Among the tendencies that should be avoided, interviewees mentioned culturalisation: namely, the imposition of certain culturally- or professionally-based practices that may not be shared by the participants; and racialisation of ethnic differences, which might lead to the persistence of cultural stereotypes. In fact, 'diversity (. . .) is not taken to the level of planning the content of the programmes, productions and staff, but it is considered sufficient if the audience is diverse' (Interviewee 24). A recommended approach is not to pre-emptively frame projects for a particular target group, and not to push for diversity among the participants involved as an overriding criterion; instead, a holistic approach would be preferable, where support is provided to individuals and communities as a whole rather than solely looking at their ICH background, age, gender, language, and so on. A too narrow focus can generate negative consequences when insufficiently experienced cultural institutions are involved, as inadvertently racist or xenophobic attitudes of their staff members may become visible, damaging the participants and negatively impacting projects.

Intercultural projects should not only aim for cultural activities but embrace a sociocultural perspective – namely, being aware of the living circumstances of the participants and how they might influence their behaviour – whenever possible and consistently with available expertise. Although there is a considerable, yet still potential, interest from migrants and refugees to showcase and share their ICH in appropriate venues, a *de facto* rather scarce opportunity, full awareness of and interest in their ICH is usually not adequately mobilised by the cultural sector. The experts from NGOs and CSOs observed that the motivational capital of migrant organisations engaging in intercultural and transcultural activities is usually very high in comparison to migrants' organisations that do not engage in them. Processes that are participatory from their inception – as well as open to sharing and negotiating objectives and outcomes – have been recommended as key to success in cooperating.

The promotion of intercultural festivities may have an impact on the self-consciousness and empowerment of migrant communities as well as on the native population, particularly if high-profile cultural institutions are involved and provide visible support. However, the lack of opportunities and venues for intercultural activities organised by small migrant organisations in rural areas was mentioned as a serious concern. In such areas, it is often more urgent to provide good conditions for making migrants and their ICH visible in order to keep xenophobia and racism at bay. In general, intercultural and transcultural work with migrant communities through a participatory and inclusive approach with activities that become well visible for the general public is considered as having a real capacity for fostering mutual understanding and social innovation at the local and regional level.

3.3. Migrant and refugee communities: the expression of intangible cultural heritage

The migrants and refugees partaking in this research revealed the expectation that cultural institutions should be open to intercultural outputs and to managing diversity as part of their policies. Ideally, migrant organisations interacting with them should be treated as stakeholders from the

local civil society. Cultural institutions should be willing to learn from the interaction with them and overcoming unidirectional approaches. On the individual level, this means that migrants have the desire to be treated as 'normal' collaborators rather than resources to be exploited for the advancement of a cultural institution's aims.

A vast majority of migrants participating in the survey expressed interest also in learning about the CH of the hosting society.[6] Overall, they value the expertise of cultural institutions in introducing migrants to CH. A common expectation among migrants' organisations and individual migrants is to receive assistance and counsel from professionals working in cultural institutions, in particular regarding networking and interacting with artists involved in joint intercultural events. Another common wish among people who are somewhat disenfranchised from the cultural sector is to be introduced to arts and heritage themes via guided tours and activities (see Figure 1). Generally, professional guidance is preferred over self-guidance for the simple reason that 'When you don't understand the story, you cannot enjoy it' (Interviewee 21). In this regard, the fruition of arts and heritage should be facilitated more in order to allow a variety of people to enjoy it, and it should also take into account new emerging barriers such as the limited command of the host country's language,[7] for instance through activities that use accessible language or visual cues.

The refugees' path to enjoying cultural activities is even more arduous and also linked to the quality of their interaction with the cultural sector. After spending one to two years since arriving in the host country addressing their basic needs, acquiring a certain level of language proficiency, and securing a job, some refugees might then develop an interest in cultural activities as part of attempting to improve their social life, provided that they overcome the impression that the host country's cultural activities are not for them. However, one of the motivations for people to participate in any such activity is dependent on being offered the possibility of showcasing an alternative version of the culture from the one portrayed in the dominant media discourse: 'some would like to present their cultural heritage to the host society and showcase the traditions of their society and raise their voice even though this might not have been their interest in the country. This is particularly seen among people trying to counter mainstream rhetoric, for example, Syrians being portrayed as jihadists or terrorists, by showcasing another side of the story despite the fact that this person would be personally interested in playing cards and smoking shisha instead of attending a concert' (Interviewee 21). For certain groups, the attendance of cultural activities remains very low. Before attempting to increase bottom-up contributions to CH production, it would seem more sensible for the academic, cultural, and welfare sectors to first tackle the barriers preventing even basic forms of arts and heritage consumption. Attending is the simplest form of participation, yet it can have a widespread positive impact as it could enable minorities to feel more integrated by sharing the cultural fruition of the host country. The cultural activities that were mentioned as the most attractive by our respondents include festivals (27%), music concerts (16%), gastronomic festivals (11%), historical exhibitions (10%), and theatre performances (9%). Furthermore, desirable

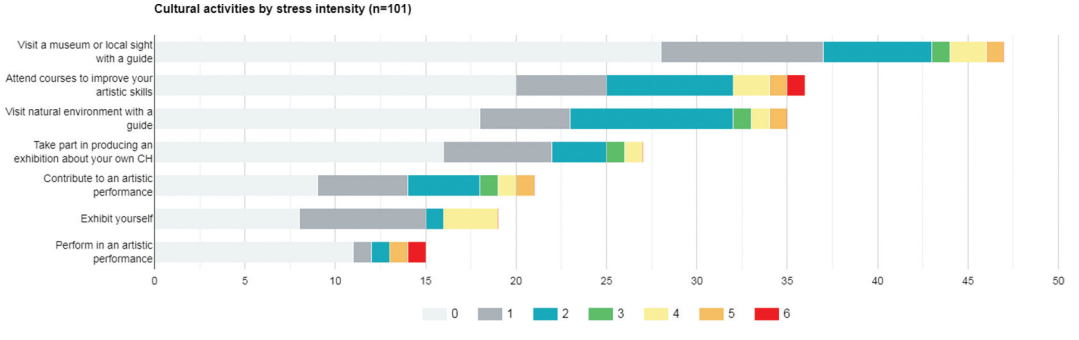


Figure 1. Breakdown of CH-related interests

changes in order to increase participation in such activities included lowering entry fees and subsidising the public transportation costs. An Afghan NGO worker working with migrant women stated: 'We visit museums sometimes. We just visited the lobby of the science centre to explain what it is to evoke interest among the women. They were interested, but (. . .) the NGO doesn't have money to pay for this kind of visits, and the women also don't have money. Poverty is a barrier for visiting cultural institutions.' (Interviewee 23). When migrants' organisations try to organise their own CH events, the challenges scale up as they face the hurdles of activities such as applying for funding, accessing venues, and complying with fire safety and security regulations, which discourage the attempt.

Two themes identified in the literature – how ICH expression can counteract misrepresentations and misconceptions, and addressing the cultural generational gap – strongly resonated in the research participants' accounts. As explained above, expressing themselves via the arts is one of the strongest reasons for actively participating in cultural activities. When migrants perceive that there is a negative discourse around their country of origin, collectively showcasing their ICH could enable them to present an alternative narrative, thus raising awareness and recognition in the host society. Engagement efforts that are based on the unidirectional thinking that newcomers should integrate in the hosting society might not represent the best possible approach. Rather, engagement based on interaction, on embracing mutual learning through the possibilities that ICH offers, produces better results and is appreciated more by those whose cultural practices are under-appreciated and misconceived.

Furthermore, the participants expressed the desire for systematic approaches that raise heritage awareness among youngsters and young adults in their communities. The hope is that sensitising younger generations towards CH could provide them with one more tool to integrate and settle in the hosting society, as well as generate the curiosity to rediscover the ICH of their parents and grandparents, forestalling the community's cultural loss. As 'educational institutions have a big role in promoting participation to cultural activities, so that children would learn about it already in schools and become familiar with it' (Interviewee 26), this could happen since an early age, as children could be better introduced to CH as a relevant topic through activities implemented by their schools together with cultural institutions (i.e. museum visits).

4. A way forward: building a bridge

The literature on ICH and migration shows that proper support for migrant and refugee communities in safeguarding their ICH can have benefits such as perpetuating a connection with their homeland, strengthening community ties in the host country, and counteracting demeaning and exclusionary narratives. However, our research shows that fundamental challenges exist at the institutional and organisational level. They need tackling to address the underrepresentation and marginalisation of many migrant and refugee communities in CH participation, production, and safeguarding. Based on our findings, we provide recommendations regarding recruitment, participation, impact, approaches, and digital services and tools to bridge between migrants' and refugees' ICH and the institutional side (Table 4).

Recruiting participants from the general public in ICH-related projects is often difficult because of the challenges of identifying and fostering the participants' motivations (Giglitto, Lazem, and Preston 2019b). Recruiting people with migratory background presents additional challenges. Firstly, migrants' organisations are mainly concerned with their own internal activities and dynamics, which might take precedence over external opportunities. Secondly, women participants might even be harder to recruit in certain communities due to cultural or religious factors, reducing the possibility of establishing projects with an intersectional outlook. Thirdly, communities may strive for cultural activities with native/settled people, but they might reject the involvement of other migrant communities in the same projects to avoid potential disagreement. Despite all this, some caveats may be exploited. The motivation to partake in CH is considerably higher among the

Table 4. Building a bridge: Recommendations

Recruitment
• Offer high-profile cultural venues.
• Consider religious associations for dissemination activities.
• Involve artists from minority groups for performance events.
• Particularly focus on community members at even higher risk of exclusion.
• Involve those migrants' organisations already engaged in CH work.
• Streamline or simplify bureaucratic processes.
• Offer ICH-related educational opportunities for adults.
Participation
• Carefully identify and minimise barriers.
• Employ facilitators with intercultural, trauma, and psychological expertise.
• In planning a project, allow time for building trust.
• Do not push for results.
• Cultural institutions should familiarise themselves with the state-of-the-art of intercultural work.
• Do not use migrants and refugees for your own or your institution's interests. Focus on them.
Directions for impact
• Make ICH visible according to the needs and wishes of the bearers.
• Let migrants' organisations create and lead ICH initiatives.
• Increase the representation of community ICH to engage young people.
• Support the creation of intercultural projects for and with refugees.
Approaches
• Intercultural openness and diversity management should be part of cultural institutions' skill-sets.
• Treat migrants and refugees as stakeholders, and not targets.
• Do not focus on ethnicity.
• Collaborate with artists from participating communities.
• Use guided tours as a way to foster general interest in CH.

migrants' organisations that are already engaged in CH compared to ones that are not. There is also an 'urgent demand from migrants' organisations to access venues for their events' (Interviewee 20). Offering the usage of high-profile cultural venues as part of a collaboration can therefore be very appealing and an important factor for the recognition and visibility of the migrants' organisation. How a project is disseminated and communicated publicly could also increase the participants' motivations. Religious associations are also good venues for dissemination since they provide room for the community in which they interact more easily. Besides, the involvement of artists (for instance, experts on traditional handicrafts) from minority groups that are being seldom publicised may attract a diverse audience through the medium of performance. Community members who are even more excluded, for instance because of unemployment, might appreciate the social aspects of ICH projects and jump on board more easily. Similarly to the demand for venues, there is a high demand for adult education: ICH projects may be configured in ways that give more prominence to educational opportunities and outputs. One last point is that strict constraints – such as the ones related to 'fire protection rules' (Interviewee 5) and 'limitations of attendance' (Interviewee 9) – may have a deterring effect as they can discourage even more the initiative and creativity of people approaching the organisation of cultural endeavours with some hesitation.

To enhance the quality of participation, the first barrier to overcome concerns the types of facilitators in ICH projects. Intercultural and (when working with refugees) professional trauma expertise are necessary. Psychological or coaching expertise can also be relevant as migrants' organisations expressed a lack of self-confidence to partake in ICH projects. Furthermore, facilitators should allow time for building trusting relationships with participants while also not pushing for results. As cultural institutions may not have these types of competences at their disposal (either within the organisation or their network), they should take a first step at 'recognising the state-of-the-art of intercultural work in arts and heritage instead of experimenting in projects with migrants' (Interviewee 24). As 'refugees tend to be seen as a resource to be tapped' (Interviewee 19), cultural institutions should reflect deeply upon their motives, avoid the involvement of migrants for the institutions' interest, and eschew approaches that may be ill-informed and eventually ineffective.

Planning around participation strategies should include consultation with communities. Our research shows a strong interest from community members in participating in cultural activities when these give opportunities to showcase their ICH beyond superficial narratives, especially in case of negative discourses around their country of origin. Forms of ICH expression that were mentioned include annual street festivals, oral history projects narrating the migration experience, and the use of photography via either blogs or local exhibitions. Migrants' organisations have their own interests regarding public visibility, recognition, and representation in the public discourse. As explained above, a way to approach this is through equal partnership/collaboration with established cultural institutions.

Looking carefully at migrants' and refugees' ICH interests can provide insights on how to achieve positive impact through participatory projects. In this regard, there are four directions that the cultural and migrants' and refugees' welfare sectors can follow. Firstly, creating opportunities for making the ICH of participants visible to bring about changes in perceptions and overcoming prejudices among audiences. This should be done by meeting the participants' wishes and needs regarding how they want to showcase their ICH, and doing so through appropriate opportunities and frameworks. Secondly, migrants' organisations should be put in the condition to create and lead their own initiatives for both adults (in collaboration with established cultural institutions) and children (with educational institutions such as schools). Thirdly, young people should be engaged in cultural showcases that represent their parents' and/or grandparents' ICH. A final related point is that cultural institutions – especially those with more resources – should expand their mandate by aiming for the inclusion of refugees through specifically planned projects.

In terms of approaches, cultural institutions must implement 'intercultural openness and diversity management as part of their staff recruitment policies' (Interviewee 4), or, alternatively, provide appropriate training/development opportunities in this regard. Furthermore, cultural institutions should overcome a paradigm of integration that may inadvertently lead to 'othering' the participants and to tokenism. Migrants and refugees expect to be treated as any other people promoting their CH and as stakeholders from civic society in CH projects. One way to avoid othering and tokenism is to promote diversity development in cultural institutions by also assessing the socio-economic milieu, which could help identify actual needs and create the appropriate opportunities for migrants and refugees to promote their ICH, while also encouraging cultural organisations to actively plan for their inclusion.

One underused approach in ICH projects is to seek assistance from artists from the communities that are invited to participate. As it emerged from the interviews, 'Community members expect assistance from professionals of cultural institutions for establishing contacts and interacting with artists' (Interviewee 11), which 'can serve as role models for youngsters and young adults' (Interviewee 26). Finally, as mentioned above, guided CH experiences represent a fruitful way to (re)introduce people who may be disenfranchised from the cultural sector back to arts and heritage, provided that they can also engage those with limited command of the host country's language.

Even though the role that digital tools and technologies can play was not the focus of this work, it is worth mentioning some practical insights gathered around this topic. Most of the migrants and refugees participating in this research were familiar with mobile communication technologies and platforms (e.g. WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Viber, and Imo), but they were never mentioned to be used as part of ICH projects. However, when prompted on how technology could possibly help, many possible uses were mentioned: digital repositories for exhibiting photos of traditional practices and handicrafts, tools for creating and storing traditional music electronically, video editing software, poster making tools, and website builders. Technologies were also mentioned as support to cultural fruition, for instance using digital media for disseminating events, or for other support that they can provide (i.e. generating subtitles in the host country's language). Similarly to the aspects related to recruitment, participation, impact, and approach, our findings suggest that any technology deployment should be in line with the expectations of migrants and refugees, and do not impose external strategies.

5. Conclusions

Our research gathered insights from cultural professionals, members of NGOs, CSOs, and migrant and refugee communities on their perspectives, goals, challenges, and expectations around how to boost the value and recognition of migrants' and refugees' intangible cultural heritage in relation to migration. Valorising and supporting the safeguarding of their ICH is important not only to strengthen community ties and a sense of cultural continuity but also to provide ground for meaningful dialogue and intercultural understanding with native and settled people.

We then presented key results from our empirical research. The migrants participating in the two studies clearly outlined a desire for more accessible opportunities to learn about their host country's CH, while also wishing for more institutional spaces to express their own ICH, especially when it can counteract negative depictions or misrepresentations. However, the institutional actors that could and should facilitate these processes face many challenges, mostly stemming from a collaboration struggle between sectors, and from the difficulties of providing fair and responsible ground for participation. To help institutional actors tackle these challenges, we provided recommendations grounded in empirical findings, relating to recruitment, participation, impact, approaches, and deployed digital services and tools.

We argue that these recommendations would enrich the discourse and practice around ICH and migratory issues; however, we recognise that several other open questions need addressing as part of future analysis and further empirical work. For example, given the many, and often contrasting, needs and priorities expressed by the various stakeholders, how can participation initiatives around migrants' and refugees' ICH be evaluated and their impact assessed? New frameworks will be needed to consider the perspectives of the various institutions and communities and to identify areas of overlapping concern and contrast. Also, how can other grassroots community groups that may experience similar struggles for institutional recognition fruitfully collaborate with migrants' organisations to jointly challenge the lack of institutional CH opportunities? While collaboration could be fruitful, due to limited resources or administrative challenges there may be tensions arising among groups that struggle for representation in the institutional heritage discourse. Furthermore, given that bottom-up ICH initiatives involving diverse stakeholders are becoming more common, it is still unclear whether it is sensible to produce national frameworks for such initiatives, considering how one-size-fits-all solutions may disregard cultural specificities and social contexts. Another aspect to reflect upon is how to ensure that the internal differences within migrant and refugee communities are taken into account, rather than put aside to directly pursue generic (and superficial) 'diversity quotas'. The major challenge is how to successfully mobilise cultural heritage to foster upward mobility and reduce deprivation and hardships. Cultural heritage knowledge and resources have immense potential that could be deployed to address such social and societal issues in relation to migration. We believe that working on these open questions with an attitude to bridge-building and overcoming barriers to collaboration and participation can provide the basis for fruitful practices around ICH and migration.

Notes

1. The USA has not ratified the 2003 *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, and traditionally sees cultural activities as free and individualistic enterprises that should not be embedded in a normative framework (Kurin 2014).
2. Seglow (2019) lists work, family, friendships, community, and political participation as alternative source of identity, meaning and cultural continuity.
3. Bajuni people are an ethnic minority that in the last 30 years have been fleeing Somalia due to persecution. In the UK, they have been moved to the Glasgow area following the UK government's Dispersal Scheme (Hill, Craith, and Clopot 2018). To achieve refugee status, the Glasgow Bajuni, who are formally stateless, have to

undergo a process of language analysis to determine their nationality. This process has proved to lead to wrongful rejections. Hill, Craith, and Clopot (2018) argue that had the UK ratified the ICH 2003 Convention, the Bajuni might have received more protection as 'the Convention might oblige other state actors (such as the immigration authorities) to consider the links between cultural heritage and human rights in ways they currently do not' (55).

4. Eisenbruch (1991) has defined cultural bereavement as 'the experience of the uprooted person – or group – resulting from loss of social structures, cultural values and self-identity.'
5. *CultureLabs* focuses on the role that culture and heritage can play to facilitate social inclusion, particularly via the participation of migrant and refugees.
6. To learn better the CH of the hosting country' was also the third biggest expectation from cultural activities" (21%) preceded by 'Possibility to meet and interact with other people' (24%) and 'To spread knowledge about my own ICH' (22%).
7. Language problems were identified by migrants and refugees as the biggest difficulty they face by a significant margin (27%), followed by 'cultural differences' (15%).

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Notes on contributors

Dr Danilo Giglitto is a postdoctoral researcher working at Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) on the CultureLabs project, aimed at developing a platform for facilitating the collaboration around social innovation compatible cultural heritage projects. Before joining SHU, he was a Research Associate at Kingston University London working on the Hilali Network, a transnational collaboration exploring the convergence between current reforms in the Egyptian higher education sector and local community-led action of digital documentation of intangible cultural heritage. Prior to that, he was a PhD student at the University of Aberdeen funded by the "Cultural Heritage and Digital Society" scholarship. From 2013 to 2015, he was affiliated with the CURIOS project (dot.rural Digital Economy Research Hub) focusing on encouraging grassroots participation in local heritage.

Luigina Ciolfiis a Professor of Human-Centred Computing at Sheffield Hallam University. She is a researcher and scholar in the fields of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) and Collaborative Computing, with extensive experience in understanding and designing for how digital technologies mediate people's situated practices. Professor Ciolfi has over twenty years of experience investigating the role of digital technologies for cultural heritage interpretation as part of national and international projects, with a strong focus on participation, collaboration, and embodied and tangible interactions. She is currently the SHU Principal Investigator on CultureLabs (H2020). She has authored over 100 publications and has been an invited speaker in thirteen countries. Professor Ciolfi is an Associate Editor of the CSCW Journal (Springer) and has held many expert roles in support of conference committees (including CHI, DIS, CSCW, ECSCW, and TEI) and funding agencies (including the European Commission). She is a Senior Member of the ACM - The Association for Computing Machinery, and Member of the British Psychological Society and of EUSSET - The European Society for Socially Embedded Technologies.

Wolfgang Bosswick has a degree in sociology from the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg in Germany. He also studied social anthropology, economics, psychology, and Latin American studies. He conducted field research in Mexico and the United States. Until 1993, Bosswick worked as a researcher at the Center for Research in the Social Sciences, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg (SPZ). There he worked in the DFG (German Research Center) funded project Asylum as a Relationship of Otherness, which did biographical field research on people in the Nuremberg metropolitan area entitled to asylum. Bosswick has been co-founder, CEO and senior researcher of the European Forum for Migration Studies (EFMS) at the University of Bamberg. From 1996 to 2003, he was secretary of the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration. He is an editor of the Journal of Refugee Studies at Oxford University. Bosswick served as a board member of IMISCOE NoE (6th FWP) and has been Research Director of the CLIP (Cities for Local Integration Policies) EU project.

ORCID

Danilo Giglitto http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5334-4136
Luigina Ciolfi http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4637-8239
Wolfgang Bosswick http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3576-322X

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