



# Intangible Cultural Heritage in Urban Contexts

The presentations of the ICH-NGO Forum meeting in Bogotá  
8 December 2019

*Edited by Albert van der Zeijden, Yeo Kirk Siang and Gerald Wee  
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**“While intangible cultural heritage is often presented as a mainspring for cultural diversity, what about intangible cultural heritage in an urban context? What is intangible cultural heritage in an urban context and how is it transmitted and safeguarded?”**

# Introduction

Intangible Cultural Heritage in Urban Contexts is a timely topic. Over half of the population of the world is now living in urban areas – cities with millions of inhabitants and diverse communities. Cities such as Bangkok, Singapore, Bogota and Rotterdam are facing multiple social and cultural challenges, not the least, due to processes of migration, the challenge of superdiversity and social cohesion.

While intangible cultural heritage is often presented as a mainspring for cultural diversity, what about intangible cultural heritage in an urban context? What is intangible cultural heritage in an urban context and how is it transmitted and safeguarded? How can it contribute to social cohesion and renewed dialogue among communities? Is there a role for city governments in adopting certain cultural policies?

These were the leading questions of the Minisymposium ICH in Urban Contexts, organized alongside UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee Meeting by the ICH-NGO Forum in close cooperation with the National Heritage Board of Singapore, on Sunday, 8 December 2019, in Bogota, Colombia. Albert van der Zeijden (Kenniscentrum Immaterieel Erfgoed Nederland / Dutch Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage, on behalf of the ICH-NGO Forum) and Gerald Wee (on behalf of the National Heritage Board of Singapore) moderated the session.

Right after the symposium, it was decided that the presentations should be converted into a 'softcopy

publication', a pdf easily accessible to everyone, including those who could not be present at the forum. We decided to keep the original flavor of the presentations as much as possible and do only a minimum editing of the texts. It was left to the authors how they would like to present their arguments. Some articles are academic, others are more descriptive, some of them mixing academics with an informal language. Two articles were added: one from Asia: Saifur Rashid on Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, and one from Africa, from Sekou Berte. The two of them had submitted interesting abstracts for the symposium, but were not able to attend the symposium in Bogota. We are very happy to include their presentations in this booklet, because it enriches the scope of this publication with more perspectives from different continents.

We followed the same structure as of the symposium. The book opens with the contribution of Juliana Forero and Andres Forero from host Colombia. This is followed by the contribution of Yeo Kirk Siang, the co-initiator of the Symposium from the National Heritage Board of Singapore. After that there are three presentations from Asia, followed by one from Africa. The book concludes with two presentations from Europe.

## Themes discussed

Four themes keep recurring in this publication:

- ICH-Urban policies: two articles refer directly to the actions undertaken by the State to safeguard ICH in urban contexts: Colombia and Singapore.
- ICH-Urban realities: two articles describe the situation of ICH in two specific urban contexts: Kathmandu and Dhaka.
- ICH-Urban experiences: The articles about Kolkata and Bamako describe many experiences to safeguard ICH in these two cities. It's not about state policies but about community initiatives.
- ICH-Urban migrants: two articles are about the situations of migrants in cities and how they managed to safeguard their ICH: Paris and Arnhem.

The different presentations during the symposium highlighted that processes of urbanization, alongside processes of migration present huge challenges for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in all continents. In the presentation about the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal, Monalisa Maharjan showed the enormous changes during the last century. Whereas in the 1920s the Kathmandu Valley was primarily rural in character, it is now transformed into a city of almost one million inhabitants. Rapid processes of urbanization

are also visible in Africa, where a major challenge is that ICH is often identified with the traditional rural way of life opposite to the more western 'modernized' way of life in the cities that is often interpreted as a threat to the old rural traditions. In European cities, but also in a city such as Singapore, processes of migration have completely altered the ethnic composition of the cities' populations. Conurbations such as Paris, London and Rotterdam now harbor more than 160 ethnicities. Talking about Paris, Frida Calderón introduced the concept of diasporic communities that experience their ICH in a trans local, global context. Sharing the experience from the Netherlands, Mark Schep has studied the 'Surinam-Hindustani' community living in Arnhem. He noticed the lack of interest of a more westernized new generation, but also explored possible safeguarding strategies involving youngsters.

Urban areas across the world contain many different ethnicities living in close proximity. This creates possibilities for a renewed dialogue among communities and was shown in the example of Singapore. Yeo Kirk Siang introduced Hawker Culture as an integral part of everyday life in Singapore, involving hawkers who prepare hawker food and people who dine and mingle at hawker centres as community dining rooms, which have come to fulfil a very important function in multiracial Singapore where people from diverse age groups, genders, ethnicities and religions can gather and interact over food, thereby promoting social cohesion within Singapore.



"Urban areas across the world contain many different ethnicities living in close proximity."

Challenges of urbanization create the need for 'reimagining ICH', not just in Kolkata, the topic of the presentation by Ananya Bhattacharya. Ananya talked about possible change in lifestyles and possible loss of traditions because of urbanization processes. But she also showed the opportunities talking about the Chitpur Craft Collective as a community of crafts people, artists, designers and entrepreneurs who are collectively building a new imagination of its historic locality.

The book opens with the presentation of Juliana Forero and Andres Forero, who presented the first programme on ICH in urban context and how it was created. They showcased the 'ICH in urban context program of Colombia' as an example of innovation in ICH safeguarding public policy on how to best face the challenges of urban life, dynamics and crisis. They showed how safeguarding ICH in urban contexts could become part of public policies and programs.

*On behalf of the ICH-NGO Forum,*

*Albert van der Zeijden (Dutch Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage), Yeo Kirk Siang and Gerald Wee (National Heritage Board - Singapore)*



Lavage de la Madeleine, Paris.  
Photo: Pepe Pastor, Île du Monde





# 1. ICH in Urban Contexts Program in Colombia:

## Living Culture, Identity and Collective Knowledge for the Transformation of Colombian Cities

BY JULIANA FORERO & ANDRES FORERO  
MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF COLOMBIA

Urban ICH in Bogota  
Photo: PClurbano.com

*Since 2017, the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Group of the Heritage Division of the Ministry of Culture of Colombia has been implementing the ICH in Urban Contexts Program, which aims to understand and foster activities that link the safeguarding of ICH and its contribution towards sustainable development. The program was brought about by the need to reflect and to act on the many challenges that communities face in the safeguarding of their ICH in the different urban scenarios of Colombia, each with their own complexities and dynamics, while also highlighting how ICH constitutes a form of collective knowledge that can be enhanced to improve the quality of life in Colombian cities. Our main question was: how to integrate ICH within the development and urban planning, in order to safeguard and enhance ICH for better quality of life in the cities?*

### Heritage Dynamics in the City

Instruments such as the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO (2003) and the Policy for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Colombia (2009) have promoted the importance of safeguarding the ICH as a cultural right. However, the rapid urbanization that Colombia has underwent, with more than 50% of its population now living in urban contexts, means that cultural and creative activities are now more concentrated in urban areas than ever before. Thus, conceptual and methodological approaches that were designed and implemented for a country that years prior was a majority rural country, are not necessarily adequate to safeguard ICH that is created and sought to be safeguarded in new territorial and

social contexts. Therefore, the ICH in Urban Contexts program was launched with an explorative goal within a framework of accelerated urbanization and the vertiginous cultural changes that are reflected in new forms of social organization, cohabitation, multiplication of identity expressions, definition of territorial comprehension and economic and political processes that influence heritage dynamics in the city scenario.

Moreover, the 2030 Agenda for the sustainable development of the United Nations has defined as one of its objectives that cities and human settlements are resilient and sustainable (Objective No. 11), where the safeguarding and protection of cultural heritage is established as a goal for Achieve the objective in question. Thus, there is an explicit recognition at the international level that the conditions of cities and urban contexts to sustain dignified life forms can be enhanced by the cultural heritage that characterizes its inhabitants.



## Urban Planning in Safeguarding ICH

The ICH in Urban Contexts Program understands urban contexts as recipients of cultural diversity, of economic and social migrations and, above all, of the permanent reconstruction of the ICH. For this purpose, the program argues that urban heritage is not only expressed in its constructed forms, but through the living uses and traditions that generate places of meaning in the city. Therefore, prioritization of urban planning and planning as factors in the safeguarding of ICH is an axis of the program. ICH in Urban Contexts promotes that the spaces where the cultural practices related to ICH take place are integrated into the vision of long-term sustainable development of the various cities of Colombia. The ICH in Urban Context Program is thus a new platform of opportunities for the practitioners and bearers of the ICH in the country to showcase how safeguarding experiences contribute to a context of well-being in Colombian cities. In order to achieve this goal, one of the main contributions of the program has been to rethink the relation between ICH safeguarding projects and activities in relation to the framework proposed by the *World Charter for the Right to The City*. Hence, the ICH in Urban Contexts has promoted workshops and pilot innovative reflections on ICH safeguarding in collective and participative spaces in more than 30 Colombian cities, with both practitioners and bearers of ICH, academia, Urban planners and policy-makers, where these stakeholders are encouraged to understand how ICH and its safeguarding is actively contributing to the principles and strategic foundations of the *Right to The City Charter*. Such reflections and statements that are generated in this collective activities, are then sought to be included in

Master Plans and Development plans of districts and municipalities of Colombia, which are in the present in a process of revision and updating lead by the Colombian National Department of Planning.

Furthermore, this three-year national participative dialogue with urban planners, policy-makers, and practitioners and bearers of ICH, has been the basis for a set of Guidelines and a Methodological Toolbox that serve as a set of recommendations for ICH in Urban Contexts stakeholders, based on the provisions established in Article 15 of the 2003 Convention for the safeguarding of ICH, in order to enhance active participation in the management of ICH. Acknowledging, that communities must be in the forefront of ICH in Urban Contexts safeguarding actions, the program's objective was established in the following manner: *the ICH in Urban Contexts seeks to generate collective capacities to identify, manage, safeguard, promote and transmit the practices of intangible cultural heritage in urban contexts, in order to foster the Right to the City and to contribute towards inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable urban lifestyles.*



Inventorying ICH in Urban contexts  
Photo: Ministry of Culture, Colombia

## Guidelines

The guidelines and the methodological toolbox are based on the following specific actions:

- Generate knowledge on ICH contribution to a better everyday life in Urban Contexts by promoting community-based action research activities as input for public policy design and implementation.
- Promote a national inter-institutional dialogue, especially with the National Planning Department and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, to coordinate joint guidelines for an ICH safeguarding focus towards Urban Planning.
- Foster active citizen participation based on enhanced capacities towards ICH safeguarding approach in the creation, implementation, and follow-up of urban development policies, projects and plans through the implementation of ICH in Urban Contexts Toolbox.
- Raise-awareness on the contribution of ICH safeguarding stakeholders towards the achievement of the Right to the City framework.
- Strengthen ICH transmission in urban contexts in both formal and non-formal education scenarios in accordance with Colombia's National Strategy for the Safeguarding of Traditional Crafts<sup>1</sup>.

These actions are developed on the basis of two guiding principles. The first principle is the territorial approach that foment managing and engaging with urban spatiality based on the functions and representations associated with ICH practice and safeguarding, as they are expressive of the way of life of communities and social groups. This is based on a comprehension of the urban context as a territorial context in which an integrated view of land

use and planning is central. The second principal is based on the relation between *ICH and sustainable development*. This requires promoting a community-based understanding of ICH in Urban Contexts as the diverse manners in which collective accumulated knowledge generate solutions to challenges towards achieving dignified lifestyles and to achieve the Rights to the City Framework.

1. The National Strategy for the Safeguarding of Traditional Crafts for peace-building was recently inscribed in the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices of the 2003 Convention during the Fourteenth Session of the Inter-Governmental Committee for the safeguarding of ICH.



## Toolbox for ICH in urban context

As the main objective of the program expresses, capacity-building is one of the main focuses of ICH in Urban Contexts. Therefore, the ICH in Urban Contexts Toolbox, is a central instrument towards generating social engagement with the ICH in Urban Contexts principals and strategies. The toolbox contains guidelines and recommendations, based on the strategies and principles that were mentioned above, for ICH in Urban Contexts safeguarding stakeholders in order to promote community based activities that aim to stimulate the discussion on how ICH contributes to a better quality of life within urban contexts. The expected results of the ICH in urban Contexts Toolbox is to enhance knowledge and systematized planning for ICH safeguarding that contributes to the quality of life in a determined urban contexts by actively engaging stakeholders to reflect on Urban Context Social Memory, generating collective agreements on safeguarding measures and planning, and augment capacities for ICH identification and how urban planning tools may be used for safeguarding purposes.

The ICH in Urban Context Toolbox has been built upon a participative dialogue with multiple ICH safeguarding and urban planning stakeholders. More than 22 Urban Contexts were visited in the first phase (2018) in order to produce a national consultation process on the present conditions of ICH in Urban Contexts and methodological requirements. In 2018, 7 Workshops were conducted

in Colombia's principle Urban Contexts. Moreover, due to the interest generated by the program, from the 31st of July to the 2nd of August of 2018, the Ministry of Culture organized the first ICH in Urban Context Forum of Colombia, with the participation of UNESCO, public institutions, ICH stakeholders, and research and education agents in that contributed to reflect upon capacities required to strengthen in order to better safeguard ICH in Urban Contexts. The Forum had participation of 595 stakeholders in ICH safeguarding and Urban Policy-Making. Additionally, 7 Pilot implementations of the toolbox have been carried out with communities in multiple Urban Contexts of Colombia facing challenges such as sustainable tourism management and ICH, rapid rural-urban migrations, peace- building, and cultural entrepreneurship.

To continue promoting social engagement with the ICH in Urban Contexts program, the Heritage Division of the Ministry of Culture launched a Call for Projects for communities interested in applying the ICH in urban Contexts Toolbox. Three grants were offered, each for \$7,000 USD (for a total of \$21,000 USD offered for communities). In this first edition, 16 projects were presented. The three winners correspond to the Urban Contexts of Montería, Córdoba (traditional fluvial transportation); Neiva, Huila (Cultural and social practices related to the Municipal Cemetery); and Bogotá D.C. (Neighborhood social organization). Due to the interest it generated amongst ICH stakeholders, it will continue as a strategy to promote civil society engagement in identification and policy making.

In 2020, final versions of the ICH in Urban Contexts Guidelines and Methodological Toolbox were launched, as well as web platform (<http://pciurbano.com>) which allows users to upload the results of their Toolbox implementation and activities and thus generate a database on information on ICH in Urban Contexts identification and projected safeguarding. In this three years of implementation, more than 1000 ICH stakeholders and ICH urban planners have been participants in a National Dialogue towards the construction of Guidelines and methodological toolboxes. More than thirty urban contexts have benefited from the promotion of participative identification, analysis and planning activities regarding ICH in Urban Contexts. Therefore, the program now has a vast network of stakeholders in different Colombian cities. Finally, the efforts

that the Ministry of Culture of Colombia has put forward in order to promote the participation of other government institutions in the safeguarding ICH in Urban Contexts, is now a thematic area within the New Masters Plan strategy of the National Planning Department of Colombia. Thus, District and municipalities must identify territorial ICH processes and relations while constructing their Master Plan.

Finally, the ICH in Urban Contexts Program achieve to integrate multiple tools and orderings for cultural heritage protection in Colombia, that historically was seen as different sectors within the cultural sector.

ICH in Urban Contexts Program is a tool for empowering communities while also brings tools for enhancing quality of life for citizens, according to their own local conditions for development.

## About the authors

### Juliana Forero



with PhD in Urban Planning and MA in Social Anthropology. Over 13 of years of experience in the fields of cultural heritage research. Background research on methodologies for the improvement of quality of life and well-being as well as fostering of resilient, sustainable development processes throughout implementing strategies for the safeguarding of cultural heritage. Alike, works on academic developments about the new shift of the cultural heritage concept and exploring both Western and Non-western perspectives. Active cooperation with international networks such as UN, UN-Habitat, UNESCO, universities, research centers and NGOs.

### Andres Forero Rueda



An anthropology graduate with a master's degree from the University of Amsterdam, with over five years' of experience in the field of qualitative cultural research, especially in the analysis of cultural, scientific, and heritage policy. Proven track record in the coordination, advisory, and planning of heritage conservation and safeguarding, including the management of safeguarding plans of cultural heritage elements and the construction of heritage conservation tools, within the framework of the 1972 World Heritage Convention and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

## 2. Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Urban Context: Experiences From Singapore

BY YEO KIRK SIANG  
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*Singapore is a culturally diverse society and one of the most religiously diverse nations of the world, and the understanding of cultural practices aids in fostering dialogue and social cohesion in such a social context. This paper discusses the important role of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in urban context in fostering deeper appreciation of the commonalities and differences among people, particularly in an era where societies around the world are facing complex effects of social diversity, movements of people and the effects of globalisation. It highlights the efforts to safeguard ICH in Singapore through partnerships between government agencies, educational institutions and the community.*

### Urban and Rural Populations of the World

Throughout most of the history of mankind, the world's population has predominantly lived in rural areas. However, the proportion of urban population has increased significantly over the last 100 to 150 years, and as of 2018, 55% of the world's population lives in urban areas. This proportion is projected to increase to 68% by 2050 (World Urbanisation Prospects 2018). These trends of increased urbanisation, together with the movement of people from domestic rural to urban areas or international movements of people across countries and continents, highlight the growing importance and role of ICH in urban contexts.



## Challenges of Safeguarding ICH in Urban Contexts

In view of the effects of globalisation experienced throughout the world, ICH is an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity and cohesion among societies. It is particularly important in urban centres, where diverse groups of people live in high density and proximity. In an era where news regularly features reports of discrimination, segregation and social tensions, the socio-cultural importance of ICH cannot be overstated. According to UNESCO, 'An understanding and appreciation of intangible cultural heritage of different communities helps with intercultural dialogue, and encourages mutual respect for other ways of life'. Moreover, ICH forms an important part of the identities of communities and individuals. Smith (2006) references Bourdieu's Forms of Capital and cites heritage as being part of the cultural capital that helps a person to identify to a particular social group or class.

The safeguarding of ICH in urban context faces many challenges. The changes and impact caused by urbanisation and the effects of globalisation affects the viability of ICH, particularly in urban areas. Gentrification effects within districts and precincts in cities result in the re-composition of the social and cultural context of these urban spaces, resulting from a displacement of under-privileged social-economic groups by those of the more affluent upper-middle class (L. Mendes, 2013). The displacement of communities in turn affects the cultural practices that are practiced by them.

The rate of change of technology has increased substantially in recent decades, displacing traditional trades and resulting in the need for communities and practitioners to consider how technology can be leveraged positively in the safeguarding efforts and for ICH to adapt and evolve faster than before. The speed at which our lifestyles are changing requires

practitioners to constantly adapt to societal needs, in order to stay relevant and viable. The above factors places pressures on the transmission of ICH knowledge and skills. Like other urban centres, Singapore faces many of these challenges.

## Multiculturalism in Singapore

Singapore is a city-state with a land size of 720 square kilometres and a population of 5.7 million. With an urban density of approximately, 7,800 people per square kilometre of land, it is one of the most densely populated cities in the world. Singapore has historically been a trading hub for centuries even before the colonial period of its history and remains a major centre for commerce, trade, shipping, tourism and cultural exchange in the region and on the international arena. Such links to the region and the world has brought about diversity and vibrancy to the cultural heritage of Singapore, making it the most religiously diverse nation in the world (Pew Research Centre, 2014). Its heritage is often influenced by cultures which originate from different countries and regions, such as China, India or the Malay Archipelago, where the movement of people brought about the introduction and evolution of different ICH elements which reflect the multicultural characteristics of the Singaporean society. The diversity of cultures, beliefs and practices are recognised to have contributed to the Singapore identity (MCCY, 2019).

Many of the ICH elements found in Singapore have adapted to the urban context, as the nation developed and urbanised over time. An example is Hawker Culture in Singapore, an element which is an integral part of everyday life in Singapore.

It is linked to hawkers who prepare hawker food and those who dine and mingle over hawker food in community dining spaces called hawker centres. Hawker Culture has evolved from street food culture into food stalls in Hawker centres, in tandem with

Singapore's urban development.

The many festivals celebrated in Singapore have also adapted to the urban context over time, where celebratory events, programmes and processions are held in urban areas, often in the historic urban districts, demonstrating the links between tangible and intangible cultural heritage. An example of this is the festival of Thaipusam, where the opening procession takes place between two Hindu temples (Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple and Sri Thendayuthapani Temple) and passes through the streets of the historic district of Little India.

## Our SG Heritage Plan

ICH is gaining greater appreciation in Singapore in recent years. At the national level, ICH gives

Singapore its 'soul', identity and distinctive character, and contributes to the city's identity as a cultural melting pot. At the local level, ICH defines the cultural identities of communities and individuals. In recent years, more efforts have been undertaken by the National Heritage Board to safeguard ICH.

2018 was a major year for the heritage scene in Singapore. In February, Singapore ratified the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of ICH, and in April the same year, the Our SG Heritage Plan was launched. This is the first master plan for Singapore's heritage sector and outlines the broad strategies and initiatives for the sector from 2018 to 2022. The plan was developed in response to the growing interest in heritage among Singaporeans, and the increasing number of people who wish to play an active role in protecting heritage.

Singapore Heritage Festival 2017  
Photo: National Heritage Board





Our SG Heritage Plan comprises four pillars, each covering a key area of Singapore's heritage, of which the pillar of 'Our Cultures' (representing ICH) seeks to safeguard and encourage the transmission of ICH. As part of the plan, the National Heritage Board of Singapore (NHB) has introduced various initiatives, including the development of an inventory of ICH, efforts to engage and reach out to communities and to empower the community.

**"It was also formulated to deal with the challenges in the heritage sector, in the context of a globalised world with rapid changes to our social and economic environment."**

## Inventorying Efforts

The inventory of ICH in Singapore was first launched in April 2018, and as at December 2019, it has 88 elements that are practiced in Singapore. Prior to the launch of the inventory, various focus group discussions were held involving diverse stakeholders, including cultural practitioners, academics, representatives from non-government organisations, youths and students, to seek feedback on elements to be included and ways in which the inventory should be structured. Such focus group discussions allow the involvement of the community and serve to build consensus and raise the awareness of ICH, especially as the knowledge of cultural heritage in Singapore has conventionally focused on tangible heritage, such as national monuments and collections of artefacts.

The inventory is fully online (<https://roots.sg/learn/resources/ich>) and allows viewers to contribute information and content. Elements on the inventory highlight the adaptation to the local Singapore

context and where relevant, the multicultural or cross-cultural aspects associated with the practice. Information on the inventory is disseminated through various platforms, including publications and social media.

## Engagement & Outreach

To complement the ICH inventory efforts, efforts to educate and promote greater interest and public awareness of ICH are important for enhancing greater understanding and respect for cultural practices and cultural differences among communities.

Major cultural events serve as platforms to promote greater awareness of heritage. One example is the Singapore Heritage Festival (SHF), an annual event that celebrates the different aspects of Singapore's tangible heritage and ICH by showcasing traditional trades, performing arts, rituals through performances, events, exhibitions, workshops and symposia. In 2019, the SHF featured many aspects of ICH in Singapore, such as tea culture, Teochew opera, Peranakan culture, hawker culture and gamelan (a genre of ensemble instrumental music that has origins in Indonesia). Similarly, the 2020 edition of the festival will have a strong emphasis on ICH and will involve the participation of various ICH practitioners in the promotional efforts.

Social media platforms, including Facebook, YouTube and Instagram are key channels for promoting awareness and encouraging dialogue on ICH in Singapore, given the high rate of internet and mobile phone usage in Singapore. For example, Facebook Live feed are used to broadcast cultural performances in order to reach out to a wider audience. NGOs and cultural groups commonly use Facebook and other social media platforms to engage their members and publicise their ICH related efforts.

## Working with Communities

The role of the community, groups and practitioners is paramount to the safeguarding and transmission of ICH in Singapore, and safeguarding efforts regarding the partnerships between universities, education institutions, non-government organisations (NGOs), individuals and government organisations.

One of the ways that the NHB supports the efforts of community groups is through the Heritage Grants scheme. The scheme provides co-funding for projects relating to tangible heritage and ICH. These include publications, exhibitions, games, documentary films and mobile applications.

Many aspects of ICH in Singapore have been promoted through the grants, including publications on food heritage, exhibitions on rites and rituals of the different ethnic groups of Singapore and cultural festivals.

In addition to supporting the efforts of community groups, the NHB administers the Heritage Research Grant scheme, to encourage institutes of higher learning (IHLs), think-tanks, heritage organisations, academics and independent researchers to embark on heritage-related research for the documentation and safeguarding of Singapore's heritage. ICH has been identified as a priority area for research and documentation. Some examples of ICH-related research efforts, including the documentation of the Nine Emperor Gods Festival (a religious festival held in the ninth lunar month among Chinese communities in Southeast Asia) and Silat (a traditional martial art commonly practised in Southeast Asia).

A new award, titled the "Stewards of Singapore's Intangible Cultural Heritage" will be awarded in April 2020. The scheme aims to raise the profile of ICH practitioners and provide them with financial grants that supports the continual transmission of their practices.

## Safeguarding of ICH in Historic Precincts

ICH in urban context is intrinsically linked to the tangible heritage, buildings and spaces. In Singapore, various historic districts have been conserved and subjected to conservation guidelines. Such districts also have rich ICH, in the form of traditional crafts and businesses or festivals that take place within the district. Conserving the physical buildings alone is not enough to retain the ICH associated with such historic districts. A study on property prices found that conservation of buildings in Singapore led to increased real estate values (Tan & Ti, 2020). Such increases in real estate values, while beneficial to property owners, may pose challenges for traditional trades or accelerate gentrification effects, thereby affecting the cultural practices found in the area.

Beyond the architectural conservation of the historic buildings, it is therefore important to explore ways to retain and promote the ICH associated with such historic districts, working with local stakeholders in the process. One such example is the work of the Malay Heritage Centre, which is located in the historic district of Kampong Gelam and housed in a gazetted national monument. The centre presents exhibitions and programmes that showcases the history and the ICH of the various sub-communities within the wider Malay community in Singapore. A signature programme by the centre is Neighbourhood Sketches, a series of outdoor performances held within the historic district of Kampong Gelam. The programme brings diverse and rich forms of ICH to the public, through street performances that include Wayang Kulit (shadow puppet theatre), Dikir Barat (Malay choral singing) and Silat (a form of martial arts commonly practised in Southeast Asia).

Beyond the involvement of practitioners in its outreach activities, the NHB has worked with communities to co-create exhibitions. An example is the exhibition of "Chetti Melaka of the Straits - Rediscovering Peranakan Indian Communities" held at the Indian



Heritage Centre in late 2018. The exhibition centres on the history and cultural practices of the Chetti Melaka community<sup>1</sup>. The exhibition was co-created with the Association of Peranakan Indians who contributed artefacts, traditional clothing, memories, photos and recipes of traditional food for the exhibition. The exhibition brought about greater understanding of the culture of this minority community of 5,000 in Singapore. Another example is the Kreta Ayer Heritage Gallery, which was co-created by NHB and the Kreta Ayer Community Club. The gallery showcases different aspects of the intangible cultural heritage of the Chinese community and the arts and cultural groups located around the area. These include Chinese opera, traditional Chinese puppetry, Nanyin music<sup>2</sup>, calligraphy and tea appreciation. Artefacts donated by the community are also on display.

## Conclusion

Cities are urban centres of diverse communities and groups which live in densely populated and close-proximity environments, shaped by the interactions and movement of people, economic growth and

urban development. The exchanges, interactions and connections between people and cultures within and between cities have increased due to technological advancements and improved transport links between cities and nations. However, we are also seeing the divisions, tensions and conflicts in societies and countries across the world. In such a context, ICH plays an important function in bridging people and cultures. Strengthening cultural understanding and appreciation is important in strengthening social cohesion and promoting mutual respect among communities in multicultural diverse societies, such as Singapore. The safeguarding of ICH is a continuous journey that has to continue from generation to generation, one that requires the support and partnership of communities, groups and individuals as well as the public sector organisations and the private sector.

**“The exchanges, interactions and connections between people and cultures within and between cities have increased due to technological advancements and improved transport links between cities and nations.”**

1. The Chetti Melaka are a community who are descendants of Tamil traders who first settled in Melaka during the 15th-16th century and married local women of Malay and/or Chinese descent and subsequently migrated to other parts of the region, including Singapore.

2. Nanyin (or literally translated as “music from the South”, is a style of music that can be traced back to the southern province of Fujian in China. Nanyin is practised in China and among overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, including Singapore. Nanyin has been practised in Singapore since the late 19th Century and continues to be practised and promoted by music groups today.

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Before his current appointment, Kirk Siang worked in a wide range of portfolios in NHB, and was involved in the preservation of sites and monuments, community outreach and strategic planning. Kirk Siang was with the Ministry of National Development (MND) prior to joining NHB, and was responsible for developing policies and strategies related to the built environment, including sustainable development in Singapore.

# 3. Traditional Practices, ancient settlements and the Urbanization: The case of Kathmandu Valley

BY MONALISA MAHARJAN  
UNESCO CHAIR FOR INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE  
AND TRADITIONAL KNOW-HOW

## Background

*Rituals, festivals, processions, mask dances are the common traditional practices seen all around the year in Kathmandu Valley. These practices are not just organized for the entertainment or for cultural promotions by government but are embedded within the social fabric of the people living there. These are the medium for the people to celebrate, engage with communities, strengthen the family bonding, and also fulfill the religious and social duties. Squares, alleys, raised platforms and courtyards become the stage where these practices take place. The tangible heritages have a strong connection with the intangible heritage as activates practice takes place in the specific location that has stories connected with its origin and reason for continuity.*

Kathmandu Valley is also known for the outstanding monuments, temples and palaces, as a result there are seven monument zones inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage Site as a single site. Most of the artistic masterpieces that are seen in the Valley are from the Malla Period (14th to 17th Century). Even though due to the frequent earthquakes, the monuments and temples underwent through many restorations and rebuilding but the traditional knowledge and skills have been followed in reconstruction.

With the flourishing trade route between India and Tibet, the wealth of the Valley (which was a separate kingdom until 1769 AD) flourished. As a result not only royals and nobilities build the temples, rest houses, water fountains and stupas but also the general people for the religious piety.

People who build the temples, monuments and started the rituals also established the sustainable way of safeguarding the heritage for future in form of endowment. Each temples, monuments, festivals had the endowments in from of land and revenue generated by it could be funded for taking care of the monuments and rituals associated with it. The social associations known as 'Guthi' were in charge of the temples and festivals. There are still numerous Guthis that are still functional which are based on the functions, locality and caste. Mostly people who have association with the place and Guthi are the indigenous people of the Valley and known as Newa. Guthi members are responsible for taking care of specific temples, rituals and practices associated with it. Most of intangible practices that are still seen are organized by the traditional Guthis with very less support from government while many numerous practices are self funded as the land endowment were nationalized in 1964 under Guthi Act.

**"Kathmandu Valley is also known for the outstanding monuments, temples and palaces, as a result there are seven monument zones inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage Site as a single site."**

## Designed for God, People and Dead

The ancient cities and villages in the Valley were designed according to need of the people. The houses used to be of three to four story made of mud, bricks

and wood. Along with the houses there used to be numerous courtyards private or common depending on the sizes, for the everyday functions like sunbathing, sun drying agricultural products, feasts, rituals and other purpose. Temples, monasteries, stupas, were numerous which could be still seen in every corners and narrow streets. Along with these, there used to be many functional structures like water fountains and



wells for the drinking purpose. Rest houses were built by the people for the travellers to rest as well as for the locals. In addition to that there used to be ponds for ground water recharging and as reservoir for the irrigation. These structures within and around the cities were not just functional but also aesthetically pleasing with artistic carving of iconographies and statues made of stone and wood.

Temples, rest houses, water fountains and so on, not only served the people and God but also the dead as many rituals and procession take place for the spirits who left this material world. The spirit of the dead still holds a place in the mortal world and there are many functions people perform for the departed soul. Not only people visit God in the temples but also God

comes to visit the cities in the form of a procession, seated in a chariot through the narrow streets or in the form of masked dancers. So the city was designed for God, people and spirits to live in harmony surrounding with practices, festivals and rituals. These Intangible Cultural Heritages (ICH) are outcomes of the complex social structures interlinked with the public space they share. But the harmony in the city space started to distort with the urbanization and modernization.

## Urbanization

Kathmandu Valley now is the fastest growing city in South Asia. This growth has been so rapid since the last few decades. Nepal was enclosed in a time capsule until 1950s due to the political situation and

did not saw much intervention in the social life as well as city by modernization. After the 1950s, it started to have some contact with the outside world and many international development agencies started to pour in. Even until 1980s, the development was in slow pace with some internal migration. But suddenly from the 1980s, Kathmandu Valley saw the rapid growth in population. Due to the centralized policies of the government, Kathmandu – the capital city was the political and economic center. All the services, government offices, universities and health services were centralized in Kathmandu. The Maoists conflict fueled the influx of people into the Valley, which was in the 1990s. So to accommodate the growing number of people, the fertile land of the valley started to be turned into housing and this in turn also had ripple effects in the historic cities.

The narrow lanes which were built hundred of years ago were not able to accommodate the growing number of vehicles and people. As a result, the need of the wider roads was sought as an options. The planners of the cities were not able to understand the importance of cultural heritage of the Valley, as most of the decision makers do not happen to be from the Valley. The population growth due to migration coupled with the development agenda of the government is having a serious impact in the traditional urban settlement and practices. The example of the recent project of the government to avoid the traffic congestion in the ancient settlement is seen through the road expansion project. Many houses, which were hundreds of years old, were demolished to make the wider roads. Also the rest houses, stupas and temples along the roads were destroyed, damaged or not functional due to the expansion which lies now just besides the roads. Dances, musical practices and processions which has been continuation for centuries in the streets or in front of temples are being considered nuisances by the people who do not connect with them or understand them and for the traffic management.

The short-term solution of the government to manage traffic congestion – wider roads instead of investing in the public transport is creating long-term impact not only in the heritage and traditional fabric of the city,

but also leading to grave environmental impact. Also, the open space for the people in front of the square, open field, even ponds started to be encroached or even turned into official buildings. So now the Valley is basically turning into the concrete jungle with no open space for people. Amidst pressures of development, numerous traditional practices continue to be performed in the streets, squares and available space within the ancient city boundaries.

## Earthquake of 2015

Besides uncontrolled urbanization, Nepal is also in the earthquake prone zone with frequent earthquakes and one major earthquake occurs every eighty to hundred years. The last devastating earthquake it saw was on April 25th 2015 of 7.6 magnitudes, which claimed the lives of more than five thousand. The one before that was in 1934 with 8.4 magnitudes. Even though the scale of the earthquake was much more in 1934, the casualties were 8,500 due to less inhabitants during that time in the Valley. If the same magnitude of earthquake takes place now, the casualties would be much more. The earthquake of 2015 also destroyed numerous temples and monuments of Kathmandu Valley. The worst hit place was Kathmandu city among other cities and towns. Even though the tangible heritage was destroyed, the intangible heritage continued as a belief of people, the need to continue those practices in order to have a normal life and well being of the nation.

## Rays of Hope

Haphazard urbanization and earthquakes have been major threats for the Kathmandu Valley. The Government of Nepal also does not have a sustainable plan for the infrastructure or heritage. Surrounded by these negativities, there are still rays of hope in safeguarding of heritage. One of the important thing to be noted regarding the heritage of Kathmandu Valley is, 'it's a living heritage' and people have an organic linkages with the heritage (either tangible or intangible). Just few months after the devastating



Ritual for the young girls known as *lhi* is being practiced in the courtyard of Buddhist monastery in Kathmandu. ©author



Earthquake of 2015, when there were still aftershocks, people carried out the biggest annual festivals like the one known as 'Yena Punhi' which required involvement of several Guthis for preparations and. The reason behind the continuity of these festivals was to avoid the bad omens for the country and people.

Now many young people are seen advocating for heritage and working for its conservation. In many festivals and practices, we could see the encouraging participation of the young people. This participation may be because it is entertaining to watch and also exciting to participate. But now many youth are seen getting together for the cleaning campaign of monuments or water fountains. In addition to that, they are also advocating for the heritage and even protesting against the government move for its safeguarding. There are several cases and ongoing campaigns where people, mostly youths, take initiative and participate in it. For example the case of Rani Pokhari - a temple in middle of the pond that was built during 17th Century by King Pratap Malla. The temple was damaged during the earthquake of 2015, but the pond did not suffer major damage. The government started to construct the temple in concrete and iron

including the pond with concrete infrastructure requiring an artificial recharging of water. So the young people started the protest campaign and also initiated the series of debates and talk programs with the experts. Finally, the government withdrew the plan and also removed the concrete infrastructures and now this pond along with the temple is in the process of reconstruction using traditional materials and techniques.

There are several examples like the one of Rani Pokhari. With the use of the social media, people are gathering and organizing the cleaning campaigns or raising voices for the need of conservation, and young people are actively engaged in information dissemination through blogs, posts and pictures stories with the use of various online tools.

## Conclusion

Intangible Cultural Heritage has been in continuation in case of Kathmandu Valley with the ancient system of safeguarding through community known as 'Guthi'. The embedded association of heritage with the social life of the people makes the heritage a living heritage

in Kathmandu Valley. Even though the association is still strong but with the modernization and urbanization is a threat for its continuity as changes has been so rapid to cope with. We cannot ignore the modern lifestyle people are choosing - independent lifestyle compared to traditional communal way of life. Also the new professions and busy schedule of people is changing the people's participation in the continuity of the traditional practices. If the timely

appropriate policies and plans are not implemented, then these intangible heritage could be lost forever. Though the younger generations are now interested in safeguarding of heritage, the strong commitment from the government is a need for the future of heritage.

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#### Note:

The article is based on the PhD research of the author and the continued follow up of the Guthi system and community involvement in Heritage. Also author has been actively involved in certain initiatives of heritage agency in Kathmandu Valley.

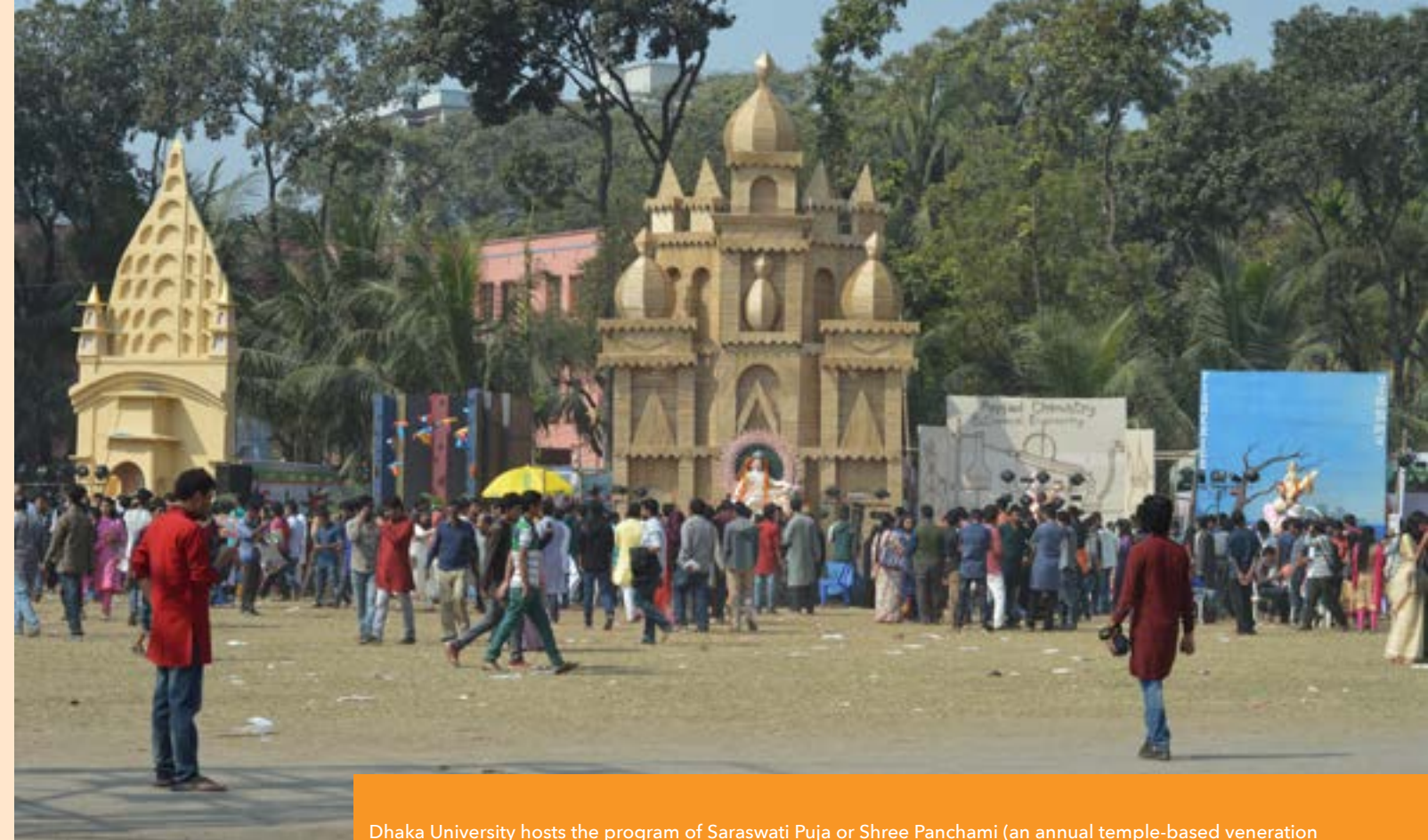


Guthi members playing traditional musical instruments besides the busy road. ©author



# 4. Intangible Cultural Heritage, Urban Space and Social Cohesion: The Case of Dhaka City in Bangladesh

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DHAKA, BANGLADESH



Dhaka University hosts the program of Saraswati Puja or Shree Panchami (an annual temple-based veneration festival) vibrantly at Jagannath Hall and students and common people gather here to celebrate the program. Photo: Touhidul Islam, Department of Anthropology, University of Dhaka.

*Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, is one of the densely populated cities in the world with over 18 million people. The increasing population migration from various parts of the country and conflicts of interest among different groups are posing threats to its various public cultural spaces and losing their meanings in many ways. But despite such decrease in its urban public/ cultural spaces, the city has also created some new intangible and tangible cultural spaces on both physically and culturally built environments and helped the city to develop a new sense of social cohesion among its inhabitants.*

*This paper primarily discusses how does the process of urbanization and migration and various social, religious, political and economic factors result changes in urban cultural space and how does the binary dimensions of 'belonging and isolation', 'inclusion and exclusion' or 'recognition and rejection' work in the destruction and construction of various urban social and cultural spaces in the City. The paper is primarily based on fieldwork, author's direct engagement in the city's life and livelihood, review of various historical documents,*

*books and reports, formal and informal discussions with a wide range of city dwellers, participation in various activities in different public natural and built open social and cultural spaces and keen observation on various changes in these spaces over a period time.*

## Introduction

Dhaka with a density of 23,234 people per square kilometer and a total area of 300 square kilometers has a population of over 18 million as of 2016 (World Population Review, 2017). According to the UN World Urbanization Prospects (2014), the population of Dhaka was only 336,000 in 1950. Dhaka has now one of the lowest per capita numbers of playgrounds, stadiums, parks, woods, swimming pools, public libraries, theatres, art galleries, exhibition halls, and museums and so on (Siddiqui et al. 2000). Many of the city's prime spaces are now earmarked for various businesses (public and private), commercial (shopping and private education) or military purposes.



The situation was not as deplorable even during the Pakistan era.

The increasing population migration from various parts of the country has been putting tremendous stress on the city, as evidenced by its high poverty rates and increasing congestion as well as higher rates of unemployment and inadequate infrastructure and cultural spaces. Conflicts of interest among different groups such as land grabbers, businesses, industrialists, urban administrators, builders, and others are also posing threats to the public cultural spaces. Various political changes in last few decades and contestation between Islamic, right-wing and secular groups since the country's independence in 1971 have significant impacts in changing the meaning and functions of many cultural spaces of the city (See, Saifur, 2017; Ahmed, 1991; Khondker, 2009).

## Material and Non-material Culture in Urban Public Space

Urban cultural spaces of Dhaka City are composed of material and non-material cultural properties. Material culture of Dhaka City refers to the physical objects, resources, and spaces that people use in their daily life and occasional activities to define their culture. These include homes, neighborhoods, cities, schools, playgrounds, churches, temples, archaeological sites, historical buildings, mosques, offices, factories and plants, tools, means of production, goods and products and other civic amenities. Non-material culture of this city refers to various nonphysical ideas and activities that people have in their culture, including beliefs, values, rules, norms, morals, language, age-old games and sports, various religious and cultural festivals and recreational activities (regular and occasional), celebration of various special days, spontaneous and organized social gatherings in different places such as parks, lakes, river banks, Golis, Morhs, and especially in and around the popular eatery places. It is important to note that all these non-material cultures have

significant impacts in shaping the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of city dwellers. Public open spaces are providing them opportunities to have social gathering, relaxation, performance, recreation and other activities. Each of the physical space is again attached to various psychological dimensions and the condition of mind of different urban communities (See, Madanipur, 1996; Zevi, 1957; Krier, 1979; Lefebvre, 1991).

## Settlements and Cultural History of 'Old' and 'New' Dhaka

The city of Dhaka, expanded in different historical phases, has experienced various indigenous, formal and informal developments. Outside the boundary of densely developed indigenous/ old Dhaka, the rest of the development is known as New Dhaka. Old Dhaka and New Dhaka exist side by side: one in the historic core and the other in the extemporaneous settlements of recent years. Due to its indigenous development characters, Dhaka is also termed as 'architecture of a city without an architect; an organic city par excellence' (See, Nilufar, 1997; Siddique, 1991; Ferdous, 2007).

The cultural spaces of Old Dhaka, where myriad of activities is performed, is quite different from New Dhaka, due to the historical layering of spaces, physical aspects and environments. Socialization of spaces that have prevailed in Old Dhaka from the early period till today in similar or other forms are uthan(inner court), galli(lane), mahalla(neighborhood), morh(junction point), chouk(round-about), and bazaar etc. (Mowla, 1997). Both Old and New Dhaka have four different types of civic/public spaces. They include shopping precinct, streets, fair (mela), and symbolic space. The first two are more universal and permanent in nature, while the last two are periodic and emotional in character. The most popular cultural activities of Old Dhaka include boat race, snake charming, kite flying, fishing and angling competition and others. Historically, the Buckland Bund of Old Dhaka (the

bank of Buriganga) has been a space for all these competitions and activities (Ferdous, 2007:71-2).

Over the centuries, the civic spaces in Dhaka City have gone through a long process of metamorphosis, many old spaces have dwindled, declined and new spaces have emerged. Dhaka was once a mono-centric city having the centre at the racecourse. Now, it is a city of multi-centered civic spaces, different spaces are scattered throughout the city, having distinctive characteristics, spatial and temporal variation with differing values for the people of diverse needs, feelings, and aspirations. The inner meaning of various spaces of different sub-urban areas of both Old and New Dhaka differ due to different cultural and geographical setting of cities, particularly due to differences between indigenous/ natural environment of Old Dhaka and the built environment of New Dhaka.

**"The cultural spaces of Old Dhaka, where myriad of activities is performed, is quite different from New Dhaka, due to the historical layering of spaces, physical aspects and environments."**



People from all walks of life are dining together in an eatery place of Dhaka. Photo: Touhidul Islam, Department of Anthropology, University of Dhaka.



Table 1. Urban Spaces in Old Dhaka

Most Representative Cultural Spaces of Old Dhaka			
Bazaars, Neighbors, Parks and Others		Historical and Religious Spaces	
1.	Chawk Bazar	1.	Bara katra
2.	Shankhari Bazaar	2.	ChotoKatra
3.	GolTalab	3.	Ram GovindaMandir
4.	Sadarghat(Ferry Station/Boat Ride)	4.	DakeshwariMandir
5.	Dhopkhola Field	5.	Armanian Church
6.	Bahadur Shah Park	6.	Khan Mohammad Mridha Mosque
7.	Ruplal House	7.	HossainiDalan
8.	Buckland Dam (bank of Buriganga)	8.	Lalbag Fort
		9.	Ahsan Manjil
		10.	Star Mosque

## Public Cultural Space and Community Bondage among the Dwellers of Dhaka City

It has been observed that the neighborhoods of Old Dhaka have an expression of profound pride and belonging due to their strong indigenous community practices within their own cultural spaces. Many of their cultural practices in their public cultural places are very distinct from many of the neighborhoods of other parts of New Dhaka. Though some of their old public cultural spaces have been disappeared, but many of the elderly groups still become nostalgic just remembering their past. Many of them still urge for creating ‘a sense of place’ in their city, like the places they had in the past.

Many of the public cultural spaces in Dhaka have very strong links with the economic development of cities. It is important for both the people who are using these spaces on a daily basis and also the tourists and commuters that float by. These spaces are the prime locations where tourists can experience the real feel

and culture of the new city. Thus, public spaces are extremely valuable in the social, economical and cultural development of Dhaka city and its individuals.

## Maintaining the Old and Creating New Cultural Spaces

The recent tensions among people of different religious and ethnic communities accentuate the responsibility of this country to embrace diversity through creating various common cultural and public spaces. The newly built Hatirjheel project has emerged as an example of rehabilitating neighborhoods and development of a degraded area for public use. It has brought a kind of harmony among the people of surrounding neighborhoods even with their differences of religion and class identity. It has already started benefitting city-dwellers by providing them with a healthy environment and breathing space to relax, and spend time with families and friends.

## Cultural Heritage and Changing Cultural Spaces in Dhaka City

Despite the significant decrease in urban cultural spaces, Dhaka has also been creating various new intangible cultural spaces to build social cohesion among its inhabitants. Inclusiveness and integration of people through various cultural and social activities are being built in some physically built environments, such as buildings, townscapes, archaeological remains, monuments, parks, or lakes; culturally

built environments, such as cultural activity centers and eateries; and spontaneously chosen sacred, religious, or public social spaces in Dhaka. A variety of seemingly binary dimensions are also observed in different patterns of the city’s cultural and social spaces. Many public physical or cultural spaces built or developed in last few decades in Dhaka have mediated these oppositions and developed certain forms of social cohesion. Though limited, several regular and occasion-based gatherings in public spaces of Dhaka still play significant roles in generating and regenerating a sense of ownership among urban communities and in practicing intangible cultural heritage for social cohesion (See Table 2).

Table 2. Urban Spaces in New Dhaka

Most Representative Urban New Cultural Spaces of Dhaka	
Museum	National Museum, Science Museum, War Museum, Military Museum and others
Art Gallery	Drik, Alliance Francaise, Goethe Institute, Faculty of Fine Arts, Gallery 21, Gallery Jolrong, Bengal Art Lounge, Gallery Chitrak, Athena Gallery of Fine Arts, Dhaka Art Centre, Bengal Gallery and others
Shopping Arcade	New Market, Basundhara Shopping Complex, Jamuna Future Park, Baitul Mukkarram, Gulshan Pink City and others
Green Patch	Ramna, Shahrawardi, Osmani, Chandrima and others
Garden/Lake:	Balda Garden, Dhanmondi, Gulshan, Hatirjhil, Uttara, Hatirjheel, Crescent and other lakes
Children Park	Shyamoli Shishu Melaand Shahbag Shishu Park
Cultural academy	Shilpakala Acadely, Bangla Academy, Shishu Academy, Mahila Samity Auditorium, Guide House Auditorium, Chayanot and others
Eatery Place/ Food Hub	Baily Road, Banani, Khilgaon, Gulshan, Uttara, Sat Masjid Road, Sheikh Borhanuddin Road, Thatari Bazar Road and others
Open Space	Curzon Hall, Dhaka University Teachers Students Centre ( TSC), Shahid Minar, Rabindra Sarobor, Old High Court, Jatiya Sangsad, Sahabag Square, Baily Road Natak Sarani and others
Stadium/ Playground	Mirpur Stadium, Jatiyo Stadium, Mirpur Stadium, Dhanmondi Mohila Complex, Kalabagan Math Abahani Math, Dopkhola Math and others
Mosque	Baitul Mukarram Mosque, Gulshan Mosque, Kakrail Mosque, Star Mosque, Saat Gombuj Jaame Mosque and others
Movie Hall	Modhumita, Blockbuster Jamuna, Star Cineplex, Basundhara Cineplex and others



Some of the open spaces have very significant historical, political and cultural importance. For example, TSC (Teacher-Student Centre at the University of Dhaka) has been working as a center for cultural activities and social and political movements since its establishment in 1961; Shilpakala Academy, a cultural activity center where many cultural performances are held every day; Ramna Park, a large park where hundreds of thousands of people gather early in the morning on the first day of the Bengali new year; Sohorowardy Uddyan, a park where the Shikha Onirban, a memorial of the 1971 Independence movement is located and the declaration of independence movement was given on the 7 March 1971; Ahsan Monjil, an historic site of

the Moghol's period; and Central Shahid Minar, the martyrs' monuments are considered as most vibrant spaces of Dhaka city. It is important to mention that some of the cultural activities, festivals, and sacred rituals performed during different occasions and in different places of Dhaka are centered on religion or culture, and in some cases, they are class based while some other festivals developed a wider inter-cultural and inter-religious relation and an undeclared social context where diversified groups take part (See Table 3).



Mongol Shubha Jatra (a mass rally with colorful masks) on the 1st Day of Bengali month of Baishakh starts from the University of Dhaka.  
Touhidul Islam, Department of Anthropology, University of Dhaka

Table 3. ICH in Open Urban Space

Event	Facts
<i>Mangol Sobhajatra and Baishakhi Mela</i>	The large public rally with masks and decoration organized by the Art Institute of Dhaka University on the first day of Baishakh (Bengali New Year). <i>Baishakhi Mela</i> is the event which is organized by Bengali people throughout the country. It is an event for celebration of the Bengali New Year, where various musical and cultural events are held. <i>Baishakhi Mela</i> is an important event for social gathering and buying of traditional foods and fun items.
Cultural Program in Ramna Batmul by Chhayanot	Traditional Bengali music and dance program organized by <i>Chhayanot</i> to celebrate Bengali new year in Ramna of Dhaka. They have been organizing this program since 1964. Now this has become a national celebration.
February Book Fair)	<i>Omor Ekushe Gronthomela</i> , is a month-long book fair hosted by Bangla Academy in February of every year.
Pahela Falgun	<i>Pohela Falgun</i> , the first day of the Bengali month of <i>Falgun</i> . On this day, young people wear yellow dresses and attend various cultural programs or social gatherings.
<i>Bishwa Bhalobasha Dibos</i> (Valentine's Day)	Valentine's Day is celebrated on 14th February. This day is celebrated just next day of <i>Pahela Falgun</i> . Teenagers and youths observed this day most enthusiastically with joys and happiness greet each other.
21st February	21st of February is observed as Language Martyrs' Day as well as International Mother Language Day. People from all strata go to martyr's monument with flowers to show their respects to the people who were killed during the 1952 language movement.
31st Night and New Year	It is the New Year's Eve on 31st December and 1st Day of Julian calendar.
<i>Sharodiyo Durga Puja</i>	Sharodiyo Durga Puja is an important annual religious festival of the Hindu community held during the autumn. People of different faiths visit Puja Mandop (veneration centers) and take part in the festivities held throughout Dhaka and other areas.
<i>Saraswati Puja</i>	Saraswati Puja or Shree Panchami, an annual temple-based veneration festival, is in January or February to honor Saraswati, the Hindu Goddess of Knowledge, Music, and Art. Dhaka University hosts this program vibrantly at Jagannath Hall and students and common people gather here to celebrate the program.
<i>Ashura</i>	Ashura (Muharram), is a special day for <i>Shia</i> Muslims to remember the tragic incident of Karbala. It is observed on the 10th day of the Islamic month of Muharram with a street procession called <i>Tajia Michhil</i> (In 2018 it is in September)
<i>Bengal Classical Music Festival</i>	Major Classical Music Festival in South Asia. Bengal Foundation of Dhaka has been organizing this festival since 2012. Most of the participants of this program are youths. Through participating in this festival young people are becoming familiar with the classical music of this sub-continent.



# Urban Social and Cultural Space: Permanent, Temporary/ Spontaneous and Occasional/ Periodical Spaces

In Dhaka's public /civic spaces, the sense of space is very strong. Trees, statues, fountains, monuments, bushes, lawns and buildings create these senses. Often the grouping of people in different places creates temporal spaces. Different civic space has very different orientation. It varies from building to statue, from park to lake, from street to playground and from eatery place to museum and gallery. There is very little outdoor furniture in Dhaka's open space. The paved area, steps, and lawns work as sitting area for people. The gathering of so many people at a time in Dhaka's public spaces nullifies the utility of outdoor furniture. Moreover, the people are fond of enjoying the place standing and walking. Despite not having enough outdoor furniture, the public spaces of Dhaka are still very responsive and in terms of variety of events and activities, these civic spaces are also very vibrant. (See Photo4) For example, in the front premises of the Parliament Building, the lawns provide the option for varied activities. Mother with their children often visits this place. Young boys and school going children play cricket and football in the nearby open space. Young boys, girls, and couple gather here for socialization and relaxation. In Ramna area of Dhaka University, varieties of events are taken place every day. In Dhanmondi Lake, people mainly visit for a stroll or to enjoy the scenic beauty. Many hawkers and vendors roam around all these places.

There are some specific public spaces which are either frequently or occasionally used for cultural festivities that are deeply rooted in Bengali culture. Organizing cultural program in the early morning on the 1st day of Bengali new year under the Banyan tree of Ramna Park, commemoration of the language

movement in February, such as the annual book fair at Bangla Academy in the month of February, music, drama and poetry festival and mass gathering at TSC roundabout, and cultural performance at the central martyr's monument are closely related to the history, culture and heritage of Bangladesh. Nevertheless, the selection of these locations is not arbitrary for these activities.

## Conclusion

With the changing political situation of Bangladesh, cultural and social public spaces can play a significant role in shifting people's engagement and involvement to a more cultural and social activities. Developing more public spaces and increasing access of different segments of urban population especially various socially vulnerable groups (women, children, elderly and low-income people, the disabled, ethnic minorities, and mental patients) are essentials for creating social empathy among city dwellers. The scheme to restore and regenerate urban intangible cultural heritage is required to create a socially inclusive multicultural urban community with a sense of rights and obligations. It is believed that increasing more urban public spaces will attract not only city dwellers but also domestic and international tourists. Urban planners need to explore intangible cultural heritage (non-material culture) as agent of social development and transformation. No doubt that looking at the SDG2030 Goal 11, for building Dhaka as a sustainable and livable city, both public and private agencies and organizations should work together with the engagement of all urban stakeholders to create more public space, where public life will be unfolded: art works will be displayed, commercial messages will be transmitted, political power will be displayed and social norms will be affirmed or challenged.

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## About the author

### Dr. Saifur Rashid



Saifur Rashid is a Professor of Anthropology at the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh and has been a member of the faculty since 1993. He obtained his PhD in Anthropology in 2005 from Curtin University of Technology, Australia, and worked there as a Post-Doctoral Research and Teaching Fellow between 2006 and 2008. He teaches courses on 'Indigenous Knowledge', 'Culture and Heritage Studies', 'Visual and Media Anthropology' and 'Migration and Diaspora Studies' both at Undergraduate and Post-Graduate levels. Dr. Rashid has been working with various UN agencies, Government organizations, national and international NGOs, and academic and research institutions of home and abroad for last 25 years. His areas of research interest include Heritage, Indigenous Knowledge, Ethnicity, Migration and Visual Documentation. He has published several books and written many research articles in refereed scientific journals. His first book was published in Bangla, titled 'Nribiggan: Udvob, Bikash O Gobeshona Poddoti' (Anthropology: Origin, Development and Research Methods). His recently authored and co-authored books include 'Connecting State and Citizens: Transformation Through e-Governance in Rural Bangladesh (2018)', 'Traditional Medicine: Sharing Experience from the Field (2017)' and 'Pains and Pleasure of Fieldwork' (2016). He has made a number of documentaries on various ICH elements of Bangladesh for ICHCAP and Google Arts & Culture and awarded Distinction Prize for one of the documentaries made for ICHCAP, South Korea. Dr. Rashid is now working on a book on 'Intangible Cultural Heritage of Bangladesh' with Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy under the auspices of ICHCAP, South Korea and going to be published by June this year. Professor Rashid is a member of the ICH National Expert Committee of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and member of the executive committee of APHEN-ICH (Asia-Pacific Higher Education Network for Intangible Cultural Heritage) of ICHCAP. Professor Rashid visited more than 30 countries for attending meetings, seminars and conferences and gave lectures as key speaker and has been a Visiting Professor of Chonnam National University and Chonbuk National University, South Korea since 2015.

# 5. Reimagining ICH in Kolkata

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## About Kolkata

Urban communities across the world are now exploring ways of influencing urban future using culture-based approaches. UN Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11) for 2030 is 'Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable'<sup>1</sup>. Target 11.4 is 'Strengthening efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.' Cities are indeed often confluences of cultures developing as part of trade and commerce routes and embody human aspirations and creativity. Kolkata, earlier known as Calcutta, is one such city in eastern India. The city started its journey as a colonial port. It was developed in the 1690s by the British East India Company and rapidly grew to become the second

city of the British Empire in the 19th century. It was the capital of India from 1772 to 1911<sup>2</sup>.

The city since its inception has been a confluence of people from varied ethnicities and cultures which has perhaps shaped the city's unique culture. Journalist Vir Sanghvi says in a book on resilience of Kolkata (People Place Project, 2019), 'A great city is not a collection of buildings. It draws its greatness from the people who inhabit it. And the people of Calcutta are special. They make this great city what it is today: a metropolis like no other.' This mega city with urban agglomeration across 1850 sq km and projected population of 20 million by 2021<sup>3</sup> (14 million during Census in 2011) has Indians belonging to different linguistic and religious groups living and working in the city. Population in Kolkata Municipal Corporation Area is 4.5 million.

The biggest festival of the city is Durga Puja





Since the 20th century groups like Armenians, Jews, Anglo Indians, Chinese and Parsis dwindled. Currently 47% are Bengalis. 76% of the population is Hindu, 21% are Muslims and the rest are Christians, Jains, Sikhs and Buddhists.

Kolkata's location makes it geographically important. It is the state capital of West Bengal which shares borders with Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. The city is a hub of trade, commerce and education in eastern India and also the sub region covering Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. The economy and infrastructure of the city has faced many challenges due to large cross border migration when India was partitioned in 1947 and also in the aftermath of liberation of Bangladesh in 1971. From the 70s, the city's economy faced decline of the manufacturing sector owing to political, infrastructural and other factors. Businesses moved away from the city as also the younger generation especially from communities like Armenians, Zoroastrians, Chinese and the Jews. With opening up of Indian economy in 90s, Kolkata saw growth in sectors like IT and retail but the city still has challenges related to employment and economy. Kolkata is the third richest city in India after Mumbai and Delhi with a GDP of around 150 billion USD<sup>4</sup>. In 2018-2019 the city received foreign direct investment of US\$ 1.2 billion showing indications of emerging as an attractive investment destination<sup>5</sup>.

Interestingly after decades of economic and social turmoil, culture has played a vital role in fueling resilience and resurgence of Kolkata in the new millennium. Kolkata enjoys a vibrant theatre and art scene, along with a rich cultural history and architecture. It is indeed popularly known as the Cultural Capital of India. The cultural richness of the city dates back to the years of Bengal Renaissance in the 19th century. An era of evolution, the renaissance witnessed transitions in a number of fields, including literature, religion, social reform, political learning and scientific discoveries. The first Asian Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, Mother Teresa, Oscar winner Satyajit Ray, economist Amartya Sen with pioneering

work in culture and development are all associated with the city. The vibrant art and culture of the city is drawing more and more tourists. The city saw 2 million foreign tourists in 2019 and international travel growth of 13% in 2019 was also the highest in the country<sup>6</sup>.

## Urban life and revitalization of ICH

Currently Kolkata has several entrepreneurial and business ventures exploring ways of enlivening heritage buildings and other spaces through cultural activities. Themed cafes present life stories of legendary singers or insights on indigenous art. Street art festivals celebrate local art and culture. Entrepreneurs are using technology to create new ways of presenting and accessing heritage. Radio Bongonet (<https://www.bongonet.net/>) is an internet radio station run by a blind entrepreneur who wanted to enable access to content for visually impaired. Dedicated channels like LokFolk or Folknama present folk songs and discourses on ICH. Festivals play a key role in reimagining cities, creating networks and fostering inclusivity and economic development. Kolkata hosts annual international book fair, several art, music and theatre festivals, international film festival, literary meets. The city has numerous theatre groups and film clubs. International World Peace Music Festival Sur Jahan<sup>7</sup> by banglanatak dot com since 2010 has introduced the city to folk musicians from across the globe ranging from Cape Verde to Finland and created opportunities for rural artists from India to perform in festivals in different contents. Cultural exchanges and collaborations have led to appreciation of the 'other' and Kolkata is acclaimed for its inclusive spirit.

The biggest festival of the city is Durga Puja, a five day of revelry when the city transforms into a public art space. Durga Puja is celebrated by Bengali Hindu



Durga Puja at Golf Green in Kolkata

communities across the world and also other linguistic groups in several eastern Indian states. The festival celebrates the victory of good over evil and the power of the mother goddess. In Kolkata however, the festival has transcended boundaries of religion, creed and language. Each locality has community groups celebrating the festival. Temporary structures called Pandals are erected and decorated as per a variety of themes ranging from historic monuments and sites to women empowerment, call for environment protection to citizen rights. This festival is playing a critical role in supporting tradition-bearers. The clay idols are made by potters living in Kumortuli, a traditional potters' colony in northern Kolkata. The settlement started when the rich landlord families of

Kolkata started the tradition of Durga Puja around the middle of 18th century. The number of celebrations increased from early twentieth century and Pujas were celebrated by community groups. Today there are around 4,000 Durga Pujas. Around 150 families with over 400 artisans live in and work in their studios in the narrow lanes of Kumortuli. It is an area withstanding a 300-year-old tradition of craftsmanship of making clay effigies out of bamboo, straw and entel maati. Today Durga Puja has become a platform to showcase art and craft traditions from across the country. Traditional practitioners are commissioned to produce art work and also get the opportunity to sell their product making it the biggest earning opportunity for them. Over the years this has resulted in considerable

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7. [www.surjahan.com](http://www.surjahan.com)



engagement of people at large in learning and appreciating folk traditions. Apart from the artistry, the festival sees publications of several annual literary volumes and launch of music albums. Cultural performances are also integral part of the festivities. Durga Puja has emerged as the biggest public festival in the world. The Pandals across the city sees a footfall of 200,000 - 300,000 visitors from Kolkata and outside across the five days of the festival. Currently a study is being supported to map the economic impact of Durga Puja with the support of the British Council<sup>8</sup>.

## Revitalization of Urban ICH

The Chitpur Craft Collective<sup>9</sup> is an example of youth-led efforts underway to highlight the unique heritage elements embedded in the nooks and bylanes of a city. Chitpur Road is one of the oldest roads in Northern Kolkata and is a unique neighbourhood of diverse communities. There is a variety of bearers

**"Since 2014, Hamdasti, has been developing collaborations between artists and communities at Chitpur through the Chitpur Local Fellowship. This has led to several collaborations with local crafts people and cultural spaces."**

of traditional art and craft residing for over three generations. The area is dotted with the grand Nakhoda Mosque built by Gujarati Muslim traders

who had arrived from western India by sea, Hindu temples, now abandoned Parsi fire temple, and even Chinese temple dedicated to Kwan Yin, the Chinese goddess of war, mercy and love. The area was hub of the popular drama tradition Jatra and music. An initiative in 2013 was started around the historic Oriental Seminary School at Chitpur Road. Artists, NGOs like Hamdasti, students, teachers, residents and shop owners of the area organized public art installations, developed films, organized walks, games, lively talks and performances. Since 2014, Hamdasti, has been developing collaborations between artists and communities at Chitpur through the Chitpur Local Fellowship. This has led to several collaborations with local crafts people and cultural spaces, including the development of artworks that reinterpreted traditional practices, new products, and craft based workshops with traditions like bamboo and terracotta crafts, calligraphy, stencil making, book binding and typography, Chinese paper cutting and making of Dimsums. Art trails meandering through the lanes and bylanes, studios, shops and heritage buildings of this historic neighbourhood, Chitpur, offer glimpse into the diverse heritage elements. Owner of old letter press makers and owners of wooden sweet moulds, wood cut print makers, calligraphists, confectioners making traditional sweets, old publisher, perfume maker, jewellery makers, book binders, instrument makers, bamboo craft makers are working with young designers, architects, social entrepreneurs and artists to create new experiences. This novel initiative has built a new imagination of this historic locality.

## Way Forward

Though there is enough anecdotal evidence on the contribution of ICH in attracting resources for development and the opportunities created by a city for revitalization of ICH, a key challenge is absence of supportive policy framework. While India has seen

several missions<sup>10</sup> for urban renewal addressing heritage conservation<sup>11</sup>, housing and transportation challenges, enabling smart communication and infrastructure and supporting livelihood development, the symbiotic relationship of cultural and urban viability and sustainability have not been integrated in planning and programming. Discussions on urban heritage focus more on historic urban landscapes and architectural heritage and at best on cultural events. The National Urban Policy Framework drawn up in 2019 'emphasizes preservation of heritage, revival or even invention of local architectural styles, the importance of regional linkages and environmental sustainability. This fits with the fact that plurality is the essence of India<sup>12</sup>.' However, the references to cultural heritage and actions are limited to built

heritage, historical site and cultural artifacts. As shared in the examples, intangible cultural heritage creates new connections, improves livelihood and liveability and regenerates rural-urban linkages. Safeguarding of traditional practices and promotion of creativity and creative enterprises contributes to sustainable development. The examples of Kolkata substantiate the recommendation of UNESCO's Global Report on Sustainable Urban Development viz. 'People-centred cities are culture-centred spaces'. Recognition and support for traditional cultural expressions and practices lead to social inclusion, creates new models for urban regeneration, enhances liveability and quality of urban life.

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# 6. Intangible Cultural Heritage in Urban Contexts: The Case of The Bamako and its Backdrop Country Side

BY SEKOU BERTE  
MALI CULTURAL HERITAGE AGENCY

*Mali and most Trans Saharan countries are currently experiencing critical challenges in the midst of a dynamic information landscape due to pathological disorders caused by transnational armed conflicts, residual insecurity and mal-governance. However, a socio-anthropological glance on gridiron street annual fun-fair carnivals, beauty shops, martial art-fitting centers, TV series and musical genres in and across Bamako paradoxically indicate that expressive culture makes community space energizing drawing upon evidential emerging processes of superdiversity and resilient social cohesion. Practices not only speak to performing the Mali's nation state in spite of the challenging life stricken situation; but also nurture dialogic discourses on encounters, using intricate artistry circuits and communities' life stories. How so?*

*To revisit the situation, a representation of a cultured contact-and-change panoramic architecture that is meshing traditional and modern building practices is presented. Notably a focus is on how stakeholders exemplify ICH and how better practices are instrumental in enlivening the past, performing social status and identities. It ushers readers into "agrarian communities' narratives" and displaced herdsman's life-story. As illustrated, only ICH can enable communities to cancel any likelihood of burning the past, to claim the present while making it possible for next generations to sustainably experience the future. A synoptic discussion drives the reader to the end of this paper.*

Drawing upon oral traditions and written sources, this paper offers a fragment of literature review on experiences in and across Bamako in the areas of artistry and performance arts. It revisits past and present human experiences in West Africa, but also draws upon present-day community life stories, collective memories and narratives, landscapes and featuring townscapes, graphics and graffiti,

expressive and material culture, community gatherings and mainstream festivals, (Sidikou, Aissata G and Thomas A. Hale. 2012. Lamp, Frederick. [Ed]. 2004; Wooten, Stephen 2004). Moreover, glancing over communities' gatherings, the paper argues that an intriguing resilient cultural phenomenon in performing art traditions and festivals is developing throughout the cradle of the Mande Empire, Mali. Meshed traditional and modern forms of cultured practices, community gatherings and festivals are being diffused and experienced through formal and non-formal spaces in Bamako over Millennia. Practices speak to a newer spider-plant of superdiversity that is bridging stakeholders' networks. Intangible heritage is not only connecting peoples, but also speaking to forms of transnational cultural diplomacy that is in the making while displaying challenges in the areas of policy and decision-making. Our perspectives will be that of anthropologists that not only study cultured practices; but also that of practitioners who are active in the areas of Cultural Heritage Management, (CRM).

The Lonely Planet's travel and survival kit represents Mali as a Mecca for any visitor that ambitions to experience real Africa, particularly the Sahel. Mali by and large is a unique contact-zone crossed by one of the natural wonders in West Africa, the Niger River. Bamako, like any capital city stands out not only as Mali's national show-case but also a unique land-locked contact-zone where intangible cultural heritage and cultural diversity are mutually constitutive, feeding superdiversity and providing opportunities to transcultural experiments. Our contribution focuses on the keyed questions as detailed in the terms of reference of the current call for presentation, beginning with a fragment of the history of performing arts and a human geography of practices are presented.

Present day Mali population statistics indicate that communities are not only devising resilience

**"The Lonely Planet's travel and survival kit represents Mali as a Mecca for any visitor that ambitions to experience real Africa, particularly the Sahel."**

strategies to survive social instability and the current trends of armed conflicts, but also coupling past and contemporary arts of livelihood, (Wooten, Stephen. 2009). According to the current projections from DNP the population size projection in Mali as of October 2019 is well over 19 Million. Also, in the Bamako District there are 1 247 702 male inhabitants and 1 240 939 female inhabitants, which displays a figure of 2 488641 resident population size.

practices. Press reviews indicated that over 200.000 tourist visited Mali and singularly Bamako prior to the spider-plant-armed conflict. Why would people crave to come and visit? To offer an answer to the question, by quoting the Australian Tourist, now aged 65, James Arthur Dyball: 'People come here to spend money but also to win. Look! I come here and people charge me for a thousand CFA because of the color of my skin. I have the money to spend; but I want to spend it to win



The biggest festival of the city is Durga Puja Open-air kitchen at Displaced Herdsmen's camp, Bamako-Niamanan. © NGO-90409. October 2, 2019

These figures represent a fragment of the overall situation as it is hardly possible to get an up-to date empirical records of all statistics. Yet, it is noteworthy to recall that in 2009, cultured and tourist events were making Bamako and its suburbs a hub of local, regional, trans-regional and global circuit contact zones. The National Daily Newspaper, *L'Essor Le Quotidien National* recalled that the World Tourism Organization temporarily established its Headquarters in Bamako. Clearly speaking enlivening the past speaks to secular intangible cultural heritage

a cost effective experience' It is a win - win experience that drive people here'.

Bamako is a longstanding primary West-African showcased urban center of cultured intangible heritage practices and community gatherings, (Price, Tanya Y. 2013; Charry, Eric. 2000: 4), where both resident and floating populations display a complex picture of stakeholders and the focus is on the aforementioned agricultural community and the displaced herdsman. Our ambition is not to provide

an exhaustive assessment of the current state of intangible cultural heritage and stakeholders' profiles as there is a dispersed existing body of related literature, (Sankare, Ali. 2010; Coulibaly, Pascal Baba. 2001; Wooten, Stephen 2000; Huysecom, Eric and Severine Marchi. 1997; Vogel, Joseph O. 1997). Also, formal, non-formal bodies and humanitarian aid-services are concerned about the quest for newer normalcy due to the current tough social crisis; but hardly focused on displaced herdsman's intangible heritage. The displaced community spokesmen are moved to know that our NGO is interested to tangible and intangible heritage irrespective of community sociocultural background.

However, it is notable that these statistics and the related literature speak to dynamic-changing contexts of a post-colonial African metropolis and its outskirts wherein stakeholders are meshing tradition, (legend, folklore, myth, foretelling), modernity, (creative imagination and contact-change alterity) to drive their life-ways in and across Mali and West Africa.

The architectural panorama displays multifaceted cultured practices that speak to contact and change. These cultured practices are nurtured by vertical and horizontal experiences that are building on networking, received wisdom and practice in order to create cultural worlds and money and non-money economies. Practice is devised to meet contemporary demands through practical-eclectic behaviors that are visible in and across traditional defensive architecture and roman influenced urban planning. Any familiar eye can easily identify the cul-de-sac streets in and across the earliest and the latest neighborhoods of present-day Bamako District and its outskirts.

Communities' experiences are mostly driven by intangible cultural heritage practices in changing urban contexts that speak to the quest for balanced power relations, status on the ladder of social mobility and hierarchy. The early bird catches the world say the British. Likewise, in and across the Bamako District and its outskirts, the early-daily commuters' eyes are familiar enough with unexpected votive prayer goods that are discarded at crossroads. The Niger River

also 'welcomes' similar prayer and sacrificial goods. Goods include but are unlimited to animal parts, plant and or herbal materials and various liquid donations. Therefore, these are eye-catching evidential cultured materials that speak to syncretic cultured practices and plainly challenge the rhetorical statement that in Mali 90% of the population are Muslims and that the other 10% are Christian believers. Cultured practices indicate that communities can rightfully be represented as syncretic believers. Likewise, these contexts are fundamentally revisited and recreated by means of daily interdisciplinary practices that speak not only to commuting habits, culinary arts, outfit styles, herbal medicine, emerging musical genres, (balani-shows), rites and rituals but also to plastic arts, crafts, unpredicted ways of creating part-time jobs as well. These cultural vignettes are not only informed and instructed by traditional readings, (foretelling legacies), cult and rituals, but fundamentally rest upon gendered traditional craftsmanship.

These cul-de-sac streets display a matchless harmony with the 'roman influenced urban master planning'. Moreover, this striking meshed style is due to complex pressure caused by an uncontrolled urban planning, greedy hunt for more land plots and population density: resident, floating and displaced population waves. Impressively too, this distinctive hybridity of contact-change architectural practices are offering spatial and temporal dispositions that enable people to create omnipresent performance art sceneries, which provide space for masquerades, vocational handcrafts, showcased traditional culinary arts, cultured artistry performance and festive gatherings at community play-grounds.

Communities are heirs of masquerading performances and other forms of colorful performing arts that are used to mark national celebrations, annual gatherings, community rituals that are held at the community play-grounds and contemporary sport arenas.

#### Profiles and Scales of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Practices that nurture Community Gatherings:

Oral traditions, pre-historical and archaeological



records indicate that most communities in West Africa share numerous Mande ancestry bonds, (Sankare, Ali. 2010; Vogel, Joseph O. 1997). The Mande is the territories that are covered by the present nation-states in West Africa. Craving for ancestral artistry roots, recovering shared life-stories, reviewing common social bounds, preserving and safeguarding better intangible cultural heritage practices stand out as unshakable rationales that motivate stakeholders to be engaged in the pursuit of money and non-money economies to make life viable.

In doing so, artistry, verbal arts and masquerading performances not only embody fundamentally social structures in the making; but are also enactments that people use to perform the Mali's nation state, to mark community gatherings, festivals, weddings and marriage ceremonies in and across Bamako. Among the Minyanka and Senoufo people of the Koutiala-Sikasso regions, Nampoun and Suwula are one-week celebrations of locally cultured practices of intangible cultural heritage that rally the village communities and their usual community allies and any visitor regardless of sociocultural background. Didadi, Ceblenke, Takamba and Ginna Dogon masks are other keyed-cultured artistry performances that are speaking to ethnic, regional and national identities that are devised to celebrate cultural diplomacy but also to mark community bounds in and across Mali. Bamako and its suburbs represent the national show-case of performing arts and masquerades.

Oral and written sources would hardly provide an exact record on the historicity of ICH practices in urban contexts in Mali. However, it is noteworthy to recall that ever since Marcel Griaule and the French colonial empire's dialogic encounter with the Dogon ethnic

group (Sankare, Ali. 2010: 57-99), the Ginna Dogon masquerades represent not only a keyed cultural vignette that is used to perform Mali's nation but also an intriguing master narrative on past and present population settlement history, official ceremonial gatherings and festivals. It is notable that prior to 1967, the Dogon people had been celebrating the Sigi for over 2040 years beginning from 73 B.C. Based upon calibrated records, the next Sigi celebration will be held in 2027 (Sankare, Ali. 2010:65).

Clearly speaking, practices of intangible cultural heritage represent a core building block of communities and nation-state since the era of prehistoric Egypt, (Obenga, Théophile. 1990:293; Diop, Cheick Anta. 1979). Exemplifying cultured practices of intangible cultural heritage in urban contexts speak to community gatherings in and across ascending circuit-scales throughout formal and non-formal spaces irrespective of sociocultural backgrounds: local, regional, national, transnational and global.

To date, a non-exhaustive checklist of community gatherings would display annual festivals like Festival *Théâtre des Réalités*, FESMAMA, FEST CAURIS, *Festival sur le Niger*, Ginna Dogon Mask Festival, Festival Wasulu. The prime stakeholders of these festivals include but are unlimited to native community members and the Mali State that is case sensitively visible and hardly audible.

Of all Festivals, only the *Ginna Dogon Mask Festival* displays a venerable eye-catching spider plant of community networks and intangible heritage in and across these circuits. The *Ginna Dogon Mask* artistry is customarily devised as a nationally

showcased performance to mark official ceremonies like presidential office swearing. Intercommunity traditional events in and across Bamako include but are unlimited to traditionally structuring cultured gatherings, (*senakunya*, the Mali hunters' annual gathering, *Festival Sanké Mô, Yaara! Degal*, the *Masa Jigui* of the Kangaba sacred Hut), community events like marriage and wedding ceremonies marked by *Koreduga* and *Lo artistry*, (Berte, S. 2001). Moreover, Islamic and Christian religious celebrative gatherings,

**"Intercommunity traditional events in and across Bamako include but are unlimited to traditionally structuring cultured gatherings."**

celebrations, like *Mahouloud* gatherings, and Christmas and Easter celebrations are noteworthy. In addition, handcrafts and commercial sector fun-fairs like FEBAK organized by the Mali Office of Tourism and Hotels offer opportunities to visitors to see countryside products like honey, butter and local fruit juices. Likewise, women and Youth associations join their fitting centers, martial art centers or their *Jinedow* centers, (ethno-medicinal spirit-dance centers). The routine experience of communities on the day to day basis is marked by the instrumental display of the national flag and the performance of the national anthem. These events are marked by colorful expressive culture, rhythmic musical genres and various choreographic trends while the music calls for the pace and nature of the dance. As a case in point, the N'Toubanan showcased masked artistry performances not only mark annual community festivals; but also transcultural-dialogic encounters during school and weekly events.

Paradoxically, while part of the communities can celebrate; others, like forced-displaced herdsmen communities have yet to reconnect with their commemorative habits and traditions. As our case study informants indicate, the Fulani communities

from the Koro area, (Central Mali) are unable to hold their *Rihoro* celebrative events since 2006 because of the religious Islamic strife. In Bamako-Niamana, the displaced herdsmen community from Kumba-Uguru and Yudiu represents now a newer displaced agro-pastoral community relocated in urban context(s). The displaced community which includes now 228 male and female inhabitants, 24 school-kids, (14 boys and 11 girls) is heir of verbal arts and a legacy of story-tellers; albeit they will have to overcome the trauma of displacement from the villages that were founded by their ancestors.

Overall, these festivals share key features in common that partake in nurturing community bounds and preserving traditional esoteric knowledge, fostering non-formal education on biodiversity, shared responsibility, equity and sustainable human ecology in a dynamic world. Most Malian communities share a core-fundamental element of agrarian masked-artistry, *N'Tomonin* says, Abdoulaye Coulibaly.

Tellingly, as informants substantiate, early *N'Tomo* education primarily focus on uncircumcised male teenagers, (aged 6-13) that was meant to usher boys to Youth and adult-life responsibilities, albeit through a traditional-esoteric discipline and punish process, (Foucault, Michel. 1995). FESMAMA is a unique community festival that is not only reconnecting with community value-teaching but also is ambitioning to safeguard and foster discursive encounters, cultural diplomacy, social cohesion and equity in and across the riparian agro-pastoral communities of the Niger River belt. Overall, language, words, utterances, and or verbal arts are represented as caged-birds and people must in any context mind their words. Language like birds, once released may fly anywhere if uncontrolled, non-regulated and or taught properly.

Present-day masked artistry speaks to facing real-life challenges and overcoming our life-ordinariness. As to stakeholders, they include but are unlimited to formal and non-formal structures and community members that trade mutual support using money and non-money economies and vocational interest areas embedded by symbolic and purposeful sponsoring.

**"Clearly speaking, practices of intangible cultural heritage represent a core building block of communities and nation-state since the era of prehistoric Egypt."**

Community festivals and gatherings are sustained by community members that rally various forms of support: mutual support in kind, non-profit donations and oftentimes associative membership dues. Only few festivals may receive support granted by the Ministry of Culture and other corporate stakeholders like Toguna Industries. Interest-areas conflicts are part of the commonplaceness of festivals and community gatherings. It is noteworthy that, except Festival sur le Niger, which is profit making event, most communities gatherings and festival are open to free public access. It is noteworthy to highlight the fact, Festival sur le Niger, was instituted by politics and powers that be that attempted to dislocate FESMAMA to Segou.

Intangible heritage practices and festivals are facing common challenges like public policy design and enactments, artistry transmission issues, endangered natural resources for costume-design, making masks, endangered biodiversity, human ecology, logistic and problems with adequate infrastructural facilities as well. It is notable that plant fibers play a key role in designing costume and ligneous plants are vital for masks and percussion instrument-design as the suitable species are under severe threats of extinction. Likewise, capacity-building in the areas preserving biodiversity, and universal human ecology and gendered knowledge is a key challenge due to the fact that the living human treasures are gradually stepping out of pace with the newer technologies of information communication. Clearly speaking, with the newer technologies of information and communication, there are more experimental superdiversity opportunities to document and record know how and know-why knowledge as ever. However, masked performance artistry speaks to unique areas where design-conception, curating costumes and skilled knowledge and learned wisdom is shrouded by extreme competition and jealousy which makes it even harder to create mutual learning venues and social spaces.

## Discussion And Provisory Concluding Notes

This contribution speaks to not only to “authors-readers’ reviews” of the concept of superdiversity; but also looks at fragmentary evidential experiences that rest upon stakeholders’ creative imagination and re-structuring alterity. Current security challenges are hardly making spaces for festivals, public festivities and celebrative gatherings in and across Mali, (SIPRI No. 2018/7 December 2018). Yet, in Bamako some stakeholders would teach that even if the space of the entire world were to be a chicken-egg-sized environment, one would still have room for a mosquito-net. On the same plane, the paper substantiates that to ensure sustainable social cohesion and make life fashionable, stakeholders are engaged in valuation processes of intangible cultural heritage on money and non-money economic planes, revisiting continuity and the historicity of population settlements while they question how to cope with side-effects and challenges caused by natural disasters, armed social conflicts, forced displacement and relocation. What is nurturing community bonds, social cohesion and how people envision any livelihood of newer peace normalcy?

Learning within the post-processual turn and the newer material turn steps away from problematic views that see material culture as solely acted upon, and the landscape as passive arena where event take place. It is a comprehensive milestone step, as analysts would see a danger in viewing the landscape and material culture as a pure visual ideology, a cognitive construction, which has prevailed in the post-processual turn. Landscapes and material culture are primary agents on asymmetrical axis with human beings and universal change-contact empirical constraints.

To date, analyst would advocate to move away from dual categories by focusing on the dialectical relation based upon the transmission of stories, human engagement with landscape, material culture and expressive culture as well based upon lived creative imagination, thriving alterity that is structuring sustainable showcased practices, traditions and townscapes as displayed in architecture, (Horn, Christian and Gustv Wollentz. 2018. Pp 107-129; Wilk, Richard, R. Pp: 73-101; Arjun, Appadurai. 1990). Notably, building practices, social space designs in and across Bamako are displaying situations that speak to varying perspectives, community issues: mutual education, sustainable access to and control of cultured practices, cultural resources, (land, historical and or archeological sites, social spaces, Transculturality, public policies, adaptations to urbanization, multiculturalism, and sustainable development, (Commins, Alissandra. 2019:6-11). Cultured building practices and Roman-influenced

architecture display an iceberg of failed public policies in the areas of waste management, CRM, biodiversity, human ecology and urgently calls for preserving, safeguarding sustainable intangible heritage as ever and fostering formal and non-formal education. Adaptations to urbanization question public policies and have yet to include futuristic dispositions in sustainable intangible heritage management policies that make room for humanitarian responses in emergency situations in and across cluster contact-zones.

In Mali, a unique stakeholders-centered legal instrument is now available: **DeCREE-Law NO 2016 - 0951 P - RM as of December 20, 2016**. However, in which ways does this speak cost-effectively to the **2003 Convention**?

“Landscapes and material culture are primary agents on asymmetrical axis with human beings and universal change-contact empirical constraints.”



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## About the author

### Sekou Berte



To date, Berte is a full-time faculty member as Assistant Professor of Sociocultural Anthropology at the Bamako University of Letters and Human Sciences as of January 06, 2020. Since 2008, he has been a part-time lecturer in Socio-cultural anthropology, teaching General Culture and Ethnomusicology at the Bamako School of Arts, Crafts and Multi-Media, Bamako, (Conservatoire des Arts, Métiers et Multi-Média Balla Fasseke Kouyate de Bamako, CAMM-BF).

Beginning from the Academic Year 2009-2010, Berte was a member of the faculty at FLASH and Centre d'Enseignement Supérieur de Bamako. Today, Berte is developing a course entitled Heritage, Culture and Economy, (Patrimoine, Culture et Economie). Also, on a keynote, he is currently exploring, developing opportunities and training interests areas with grassroots communities and students from the Bamako School of Arts that conduct field-school activities in ethnomusicology in and across our NGO's pilot project areas as of early March 2017 to present. Likewise, building on our UNESCO 13th COM learning experience, we are networking to bridge and develop sustainable teamwork in the areas of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in and across Mali and Africa.

Berte oftentimes conducts miscellaneous activities in the areas of civil and military engineering. As a case in point, he helped Travaux Mobile de Construction, (TMC-SA) read the UN-MINUSMA RFPS-2030-11-2014, processed and mounted the technical and commercial proposals that were filed to the United Nations' Procurement Divisions in January 2015. In November 2014, he was on an embedded flight to Kidal, Mali for a site visit of the projected Helicopter Platform construction. The visit was initiated by MINUSMA to inform and instruct the drafting of the technical and commercial proposals that were filed to the UN Procurement Division. To date, as the Executive Manager of Agence du Patrimoine Culturel du Mali, he is the Project Coordinator of a pilot self-help projected Cultural House Program among grassroots communities. Furthermore, Mali Cultural Heritage is furthering an ambitious sociocultural project geared up to drafting a National Register of Cultural Heritage, capacity-building in the areas of numeracy and literacy, using sustainable peacemaking cultured practices to foster social cohesion.

Berte is a freelance translation consultant for several institutions, namely TRANSCOM-B2Gold, Plan International Mali, FAO, and IUCN-Mali. He is a member of various socio-professional networks, namely Observatoire de l'Etat de Droit, MANSA, (Mande Studies Association), the Fulbright Alumni and the UCL-UK Alumni network. Berte is a polyglot and he is a trained instructor in teaching and transcribing Bamanankan language since December 30th 1988.

# 7. The intangible cultural heritage of migrants: The work of Île du Monde association in Paris

BY FRIDA CALDERÓN BONY  
ÎLE DU MONDE

*Since 2012, the association Île du Monde has given itself the priority objective of making visible and promoting the intangible cultural heritage carried by the migrant communities located in Paris and its suburbs. Our association is convinced of the crucial importance of migrants in defining a moving intangible cultural heritage. Today, it is undeniable that migrants are the main vectors of transmission of ICH outside the contexts of origin and that the vivacity and visibility of the practices «from elsewhere» represent an essential part of the cultural landscape of contemporary cities.*

The work of Île du Monde began with a simple observation that came from our daily life: in Paris and in the Parisian region, inhabitants of different nationalities implement a range of practices and ways of doing (or redoing), which demonstrates the vitality

of multiple traditional practices and whose existence depends fundamentally on the ability of these people to live their culture outside their place of origin. Reflecting a great cultural diversity, our project was quickly about being able to create an ethnographic type register to know not so much about the authenticity of these practices but rather about their permanence in time, their connection to a tradition rooted elsewhere, their transformations along their migratory trajectory. Our objective is to make these practices visible in the French capital as well as to know their state of safeguard. These different practices are linked to specific cultural communities and to people concerned with maintaining their vitality; they remind us of the importance of valuing cultural specificities in order to promote interaction between cultures in the contemporary city.



Lavage de la Madeleine, Paris.  
Photo: Daniel Ortiz, Île du Monde



Our association has seized the criteria set out in the Convention for the Safeguarding of ICH, adopted by UNESCO in 2003, to formally work on intangible heritage however, focusing on the one claimed by immigrant communities. In fact, the importance given by this convention to the participation of the communities (groups, individuals) in the recognition, transmission and safeguarding of their heritage, as well as the shift from heritage objects to practice, enabled us to systematize our observations. In 2013, we started working with the French Ministry of Culture and Communication to contribute to the building of the Inventory of French ICH.

## Translocal

We adopted the 'translocal' category proposed by anthropologist Chiara Bortolotto (2011) in order to distinguish the mobility condition of heritage practices carried by migrants. Our research has thus been consolidated in what can be considered as a new field of work for the heritage study: the ICH of moving cultures. For Île du Monde, it is very important to contribute to the creation of this field of reflection that takes into account the specificity of cultural practices in migration. Other authors of the heritage study, such as Laurier Turgeon (2010), have already proposed terms such as 'diasporic heritage', 'deterritorialized' or 'trans-territorial' heritage, working in this perspective which seeks to name a heritage that occurs in several spaces and which is nevertheless capable of being transmitted and reproduced.

In this way, Île du Monde has developed a working methodology that gives priority to the participation of communities in defining their own heritage. Our approach consists in going to meet people, to exchange with them and to know about their opinion on the practices as well as on the interest to make them exist in Paris and/or in Île-de-France. Recognizing the existence of traditional know-how while valuing the importance of those who make it happen is a way for us to contribute to the knowledge and recognition of the culture from which this knowledge originates. From

the creation of workshops to identify «knowledge» and «know-how» we encourage the promotion of traditional practices carried by migrants.

We have adapted the methodology proposed by UNESCO sheets for inclusion in the representative lists, because since it is a multi-located heritage, we stimulate a reflection on the transformations and/or permanencies of it - here in time and also in space. **We developed a methodology based on four**

**"Thanks to the production of these videos, migrants collaborate as witnesses and guarantors of their traditions, while developing a reflection on the reconfigurations and re-appropriations of this living and moving heritage."**

**indicators to define what could be considered a translocal or migrant ICH:**

- 1) The stable presence, with a certain duration, in the society of destination of the community carrying the heritage element. The main work consists in this first step to reconstruct the migratory history of the community in question.
- 2) Repeated attempts to reproduce the practice in a migratory context. We are interested in practices that already have a certain anchorage in the destination society, and not in practices that have 'occurred' only a few times.
- 3) The process of filiation of the practice with the context of origin, but without neglecting the process of transformation/adaptation in the society of destination. Here it is necessary to retrace the hybridization and/or continuity experienced by the practice in a migratory context.
- 4) The concern of transmission on the part of the community. Only the practices from the communities who are determined to reproduce them have a real

vitality in the societies of destination; it is however important to evaluate their state of safeguard.

Applying this methodology, Île du Monde accompanied the production of 13 fact sheets for the inventory of French ICH, all of them being practices coming from the migrant communities located in Paris and its peripheral region.

In addition to the production of the sheets for the inventory of French ICH, Île du Monde produces documentary videos to accompany these sheets each time. Thanks to the production of these videos, migrants collaborate as witnesses and guarantors of their traditions, while developing a reflection on the reconfigurations and re-appropriations of this living and moving heritage. This exercise of voicing and imaging enables migrants to reclaim their heritage while observing the needs of safeguarding, including transmission.

Moreover, these videos are also a very effective way of giving back to the communities, as well as they represent relevant teaching material to stimulate learning and transmission within the communities, as well as to make discover to the other their cultural specificities.

## Projects contributing to social integration

Île du Monde is also developing projects to contribute to the social integration and professional integration of migrants. Starting from the promotion of knowledge, the objective is to enable migrants to establish a link between their knowledge and the possibility of transmitting them, as well as to support them in studying how they can make a living out of them, building foundations for work and employment. Our first project was 'Meeting around cooking - Île du Monde', an e-commerce portal to connect with amateur cooks living in the north of Paris. These cooks are immigrants with remarkable traditional culinary

skills, and their common thread is their desire to share their culture of origin over a traditional meal at home. The services offered by cooks are for example: tasting a meal (the person only comes to eat) or a gastronomic discovery workshop (learning how to prepare a recipe) at the cook's place, take-out meals or home chef (the cook is invited to a person's home to cook). This first project facilitated the creation of a sub-project, which actually represented a crucial next step in our non-profit organization: it was called 'Île des Savoirs' (island of knowledge) and it was a sustainable catering service, building on social and economic integration through traditional skills around gastronomy. Through this initiative, the cooks offered their services on the occasion of public events that Île du Monde was managing to find and partner up with. A very successful example was the preparation of a buffet with dishes from Mali and Senegal for the Quai Branly museum in Paris (one of the most important museums in Paris, founded by former French President Jacques Chirac). This museum specifically features indigenous art and cultures of Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas: it's on the occasion of the inauguration of their exhibition "Routes of Africa", which promoted a continent at the centre of world history, through a variety of artistic pieces.

We also contribute to the visibility of ICH in the Paris region thanks to an agenda made up of events and other cultural activities offered by the immigrant communities. Celebrations, workshops, internships, concerts, festivals, exhibitions, conferences or any other activities related to living heritage are promoted by our team every month.

Île du Monde also disseminates its research activities through the publication of articles in scientific journals and through its participation in different gatherings (congress, seminars, etc.).

More recently, our association has been developing a new component of work as advisors and/or monitors in the development of diagnostics on ICH conditions in specific contexts. Île du Monde got the chance to work in and on Guadeloupe since July 2019, as it won a public market that looked asked to carry out an inventory on the knowledge and promotion of ICH on this island.



Holi Festival, cité universitaire, Paris  
Photo: Daniel Ortiz, Île du Monde

## Festivals

In the urban context, ICH carried by migrants is often presented in the form of festivals, rites, different types of celebrations or even in the form of 'show'; it has a visibility that is being created and also some form of appropriation of public spaces from the part of communities. In this sense, ICH can be a source for the creation and planning of cultural policies that can, by seizing these cultural events, propose a cultural and even tourism offer that stimulates not only the economy but also a social dialogue through the interaction between cultures.

The traditional knowledge carried by migrants can also be shared beyond their own community, through the creation of workshops and courses; through those channels, it is possible to imagine the creation of learning spaces in order to stimulate training and exchange between diverse populations.

Also, traditional knowledge can become pathways to professional integration by enhancing the existence of traditional competencies and skills. An example of this is the case of African hairdressing, which is undoubtedly a very important job market among people of African origin thanks to the creation of beauty salons in the French capital.

The work done by île du Monde since its creation confirms the interest to work on the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the migrant populations. Our actions can be considered a welcoming device as well, because welcoming means receiving the other at home with his/her difference, with his/her own heritage; and welcoming also means integration, because valuing the knowledge and skills of everyone means considering ICH a resource for articulating multiple identities and promoting interaction between them in today's cities.

**"Traditional knowledge can become pathways to professional integration by enhancing the existence of traditional competences and skills."**

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## About the author

### Frida Calderón Bony



is an Anthropologist. She obtained her doctorate in Social Anthropology and Ethnology at EHESS-Paris. Her main fields of research are migration and spatial transformations as well as the anthropology of religious changes. She is particularly interested in the description and understanding of the modes of movement of people but also of goods, ideas, practices and imaginaries; and of their forms of registration in migratory spaces. Since 2016, she is the President of île du Monde association.

Île du Monde team is a group of friends and colleagues of different nationalities and with complementary trainings: Pepe Pastor (cultural management) Simone Tortoriello (sociologist) Daniel Ortiz and Frida Calderón (anthropologists) Carlo Barletta (head of social and solidarity economy) and Stéphanie Magalage (communications officer).



# 8. Safeguarding travelling intangible cultural heritage:

## The case of Hindustani ICH in a super-diverse city district

BY MARK SCHEP  
DUTCH CENTRE FOR INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

### Introduction

*Intangible cultural heritage travels all over the world. At the NGO ICH Forum in Bogota several terms were used to define this, for example heritage of diasporas, transnational heritage or as I do here: travelling intangible cultural heritage. Saphinaz Amal Naguib (2013) identified immigration, as well as globalization and homogenization of cultures, as possible threats to living heritage (2013). Furthermore, because immigrants have to adjust to a new context, Naguib argues that 'the flow from one setting to another and the transmission and the dissemination of this transferred knowledge entails a certain degree of reinterpretation and adaptation' (2013, p. 47). These possible threats and adjustments regarding travelling ICH will be the focus of this paper.*

Traveling intangible cultural heritage is most prominent in cities, because immigrants often live in cities. For this reason, cities become places with a rich diversity of people from all over the world. Steven Vertovec (2007) introduced a term for the emerging and growing (ethnic) diversity (in diversity) and lack of a majority group: *superdiversity*. The research for this paper took place in the context of the research line Intangible cultural heritage & Superdiversity.<sup>1</sup> The relation between intangible cultural heritage and superdiversity is a point of focus for the Dutch Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage. One of the researches focused on a superdiverse city district in Rotterdam. In 2015, a constellation of festivities, food cultures, and social practises were put forward to represent the diversity of the West-Kruiskade as a whole, with the purpose to safeguard this cultural diversity (Van der Zeijden, 2017). The people of the West-Kruiskade identify with their neighbourhood because of the diversity, and lack of a majority group. At the Kruiskade, Diwali, Ketu Koti and Chinese New Year became public events in which everybody can join.

In line with Naguib's remark about reinterpretation of living heritage, Van der Zeijden (2017) concludes

that at the Kruiskade you can no longer speak of 'a clear set of different ethnic cultures, with each ethnic group cultivating its own ethnic traditions in isolation. [...] The coming together of so many different ethnicities and traditions implies a new dynamic of social cohesion in which old and new traditions are appropriated in a new and diverse context (p. 35)'. In Rotterdam, one group is crucial; ethnic entrepreneurs of the Kruiskade coorganize the events and can be seen as custodians. Another important actor is the municipality. They formed a working group in order to tackle the criminality and social problems the Kruiskade faced. The working group had a building in the street and therefore also served as a meeting place and intermediary. The role of the residents regarding the intangible cultural heritage is less prominent at the Kruiskade.

In a new research, we decided to focus on the question how ethnic groups function in the broader context of a superdiverse city district and what the consequences of this are for the safeguarding of their intangible cultural heritage. How is ICH transmitted in such a context, including reinterpretations and possible adaptations as suggested by Naguib? The SurinameseHindustani in Malburgen (Arnhem) will serve as case to shed more light on this. Three questions will be addressed: (1) What challenges are indicated by the Surinam-Hindustani community in Malburgen concerning their intangible cultural heritage; (2) What are their safeguarding practises?; and (3) What can be learned about transmitting ICH in a superdiverse context? First, I will introduce the SurinameseHindustani and their travelling intangible cultural heritage.

1. <https://www.immaterieelerfgoed.nl/en/superdiversiteit>



Ashna volunteers preparing food for a festivity  
Photo by Lila Ramkisoen

## The Surinam Hindustani in Arnhem

The SurinameseHindustani (or IndoSurinamese) are a special group of immigrants. After the abolition of slavery in 1863, the Dutch colonizers of Surinam were looking for a new force of labour. One of the groups that came to Surinam were Hindustanis from India; their descendants still live in Surinam. In the period before and after Surinam gained independence from the Netherlands in 1975, many Surinamese (Hindustani) emigrated to the Netherlands. For this reason, their heritage also travelled to the Netherlands. The majority of these immigrants live in the Randstad, the most urbanized part in the West of the Netherlands. For example, in The Hague there is a Little India area and almost ten percent of the city's residents are Hindustani. Although most Surinam-Hindustani live in the Randstad, a small community also lives in Arnhem.

2. <http://inmalburgen.nl/item/multiculturele-werkgroep-ashna/>

Arnhem's superdiverse city district of Malburgen hosts over 120 nationalities, on a total population of only 10.000. In a recent report of the municipality of Arnhem some challenges of Malburgen were identified: a lack of social cohesion, high levels of loneliness, unemployment and language deficiency. The West-Kruiskade faced similar social problems. In contrast to the Kruiskade there is not a prominent commercial and touristic street with a large variety of ethnic entrepreneurs. Malburgen does have several community centres in which different ethnic groups

**"Arnhem's superdiverse city district of Malburgen hosts over 120 nationalities, on a total population of only 10.000."**

have their own evenings. Potentially these centres could be an (intercultural) meeting point for the neighbourhood, however as one of the social workers remarked: 'Mostly only people from one ethnic group visit the centre on a particular evening.' In one of the community centres a group of Surinam-Hindustani come together; since 1995, Multicultural Workgroup Ashna Arnhem organizes all sorts of cultural activities on Friday evenings.

The Ashna Logo. Focusing on multiculturalism



Their goal is, as stated on their webpage, 'to organize activities for and to provide support to the Hindustani community in Arnhem and the surrounding area'.<sup>2</sup> These activities vary from events related to the Hindustani culture to activities focused on education and healthcare. For example, in 2019 they organized lecture nights, book presentations, card game events, and dance nights.

Two of their main events, intangible cultural heritage that is celebrated in different countries all over the world, are Holi Phagwa and Diwali. Although Ashna's focus is on the Hindustani community, everybody is welcome to join the activities; For example, in order to be more inclusive, they added *multicultural* to their work group name. Based on observations in the community centre, interviews with six Ashna members and an expert meeting with cultural brokers and social workers in Arnhem, I will elaborate on the safeguarding issues of the Surinam-Hindustani in Malburgen. How are they keeping their travelling intangible cultural heritage alive in a superdiverse context?

## Challenges for intangible cultural heritage

The Ashna members were clear about their main challenge: involving the next generations, the ones that are born and raised in the Netherlands. Most active Ashna members are first generation SurinameseHindustani's and thus often above 60 years old. They are born and raised in Suriname, a country with a large group of Hindustanis. Interestingly the number of Hindustanis in Surinam is nearly the same as in the Netherlands (160.000), however in Surinam they form almost a quarter of the total population, compared to only 1 percent in the Netherlands. These (now elderly) people thus grew up in a country in which Hindustani culture was a distinct part of daily life. For example, in Surinam Holi Phagwa is celebrated in the public sphere, while - besides recent celebrations of Holi in The Hague and Rotterdam - in the Netherlands this festivity is celebrated at home or within their own community in a sports hall, community centre or theatre.

Holi Celebration in Rotterdam



© Sanjay Gangadin / PictureMomentZ.NL / APNA Holi Feest Zuiderpark Rotterdam / AHoy, 6 Maart 2015



The Ashna members explain that for the younger generations festivals such as Diwali are a less prominent event in their life, especially when it is only celebrated at home. Dutch national festivities such as Koningsdag (King's Day) cannot be ignored because they are a part of public life – even if you do not want to be involved. One of the elderlies explains: 'Our children are in way more westernized and therefore also have a lack of knowledge about "their own" heritage.' In this, a young Hindustani points towards his parents: 'They don't push me towards the Hindustani heritage.' Additionally, both the older as younger interviewed persons indicate that some of the Friday evening activities are less appealing to the next generations. 'The youngsters have other interests and priorities', one of the elderly states. Besides the fact that the youngsters are less engaged, other inhabitants of Malburgen are also not involved. Although the activities are open to everyone, only Hindustanis visit, more specifically the ones from Surinamese descent. This in contrast to the West-Kruiskade, where shop owners from different ethnic backgrounds are involved in a diverse range of ethnic festivities.

Another challenge has to do with money. All activities are organized by volunteers and the working group does not have any cash to finance events; only the use of the community centre is subsidized by the municipality. Therefore, for some of the activities a small entrance fee to cover the costs is asked; sometimes this a barrier for people to visit. The pandit (Brahmin scholar), who joined the interview, explained: 'people want to experience their culture, but they do not want to pay for it.' Nevertheless, in line with the mission of Ashna one member remarked: 'We need to be creative and keep in mind we want to promote our own culture.'

During the interviews, some of the discussed topics were not necessarily evaluated as challenges but nevertheless give insights into the processes of travelling intangible cultural heritage and adjustments that are made.

For example, because the Ashna members meet in the community centre on Friday evenings, Holi and Diwali are always celebrated on these days, although the exact date of the festivities could be on another day. Furthermore, because they celebrate Holi in the community centre (and not outside), the Ashna members explained they are not allowed to throw with colours. One Ashna member noted: 'There are elements that can change, but it is important that the core stays the same.' These are small examples of what Naguib (2013) explains as the need for reinterpretation of living heritage in migratory contexts; intangible cultural heritage 'is attuned to new environments in order to live through uncasing adjustments' (p. 47).

In a different way this can be observed as well in the following example. The Ashna members raised their concerns about two issues of recent years. First, in the summer of 2019 a nonHindustani group organized a dance event and named it Holi House Party. The Brahmin scholar explained his concerns: 'When you use the term Holi and organize an event in the summer, you do not respect the character of Holi, a festivity that celebrates the start of spring.' An Ashna member added that 'such things reduce the value of Holi'. A second example, mentioned by a young Hindustani lady, is the use of the word Holi by Rituals<sup>3</sup> (body cosmetics). On their website they advertise with 'The Ritual of Holi – colour your world with love'. The company offers different kinds of body cosmetics which they relate to Holi. Although this last example was not introduced as a problem during the interview, both examples can be seen as forms of cultural appropriation, the adoption of elements of one culture by members of another (dominant majority) culture. This probably happens more in countries where the Hindustani culture is not dominant. In the case of the Holi House Party, the Ashna members were happy to mention that some young Hindustani's protested the use of the term Holi, because, as she explained: 'This indicates they care for their heritage.' Besides this promising sign of involvement, Ashna faces the challenges to their ICH in several ways.

## Safeguarding actions by Ashna

Because Ashna knows the second and third generations are necessary to keep their intangible cultural heritage alive, they try to involve them in several ways. In order to understand why the next generations are less involved Ashna invited two youngsters for a panel discussion and sent out a questionnaire to students from Hindustani descent. They hoped to learn how they could make youngsters more enthusiastic for the Hindustani heritage. One of the insights was that public events in which you can share your experiences within a bigger group are important. This is in line with a statement made

by one of the Ashna members: 'My children were less interested in Diwali when we celebrate it within our own household. But, when I take them to the community centre, to celebrate it with others, they really feel a sense of community.' In general, the youngsters in the panel stated that bigger events such as Holi, but also traditional weddings, are quite popular amongst the next generation. A young Hindustani lady explained that another way to involve youngsters is to make the events more attractive for youngsters. 'You can organize a dance night to attract more youngsters to the community centre, what may cause them to return more often for other events.' Furthermore, in order to attract more youngsters, the activities should be more visible. For instance, the last Facebook post was in September 2018, one year ago.



Chautal performance at the community centre  
Photo by Lila Ramkisoen

3. <https://www.rituals.com/nl-nl/collection-story-holi.html>

This young lady therefore offered to revive the Facebook page of Ashna and to look for other ways to promote activities.

Additionally, she mentioned the Hindoe Student Forum Nederland (HSFN) could play a role in safeguarding the Hindustani heritage in the Netherlands. HSFN is a student association with the goal to represent the interest of Hindustani students. Furthermore, Ashna sees a role for the Dutch Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage. Before I contacted the Ashna members they were not aware of the existence of the Centre. During the interview, one of the Ashnamembers stated that the website of the Centre could be a way to make the Hindustani heritage more visible. She considers registering Chautal – music that is performed during Holi – in the Network for Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Netherlands. There are only a few persons left in the Netherlands that are familiar with this, she explained. Besides focusing on the own community, Ashna could also learn from and cooperate with other organizations or Hindustani communities in the Netherlands.

## Examples from other organisations and cities

To start, two examples from Arnhem. Cultural brokers and social workers in Arnhem indicate they could play a role in the safeguarding of ICH as well. They explain that living heritage could be used to create more social cohesion and understanding between different ethnic groups, which they find important because they qualify Arnhem as a segregated city. This is partly illustrated by the fact that since 2013 there is another nonprofit organization in the north of the city that organizes Diwali and Holi, *Arnhem Kent Kleur* (Arnhem knows colour). They have several local sponsors, promote their events via YouTube<sup>4</sup>, and

receive some attention on websites<sup>5</sup> and in regional newspapers. Approximately 100 persons visited the 2018 edition of Diwali, and, as stated in one of their own articles, ‘also people from other cultures joined the celebration’.<sup>6</sup> Ashna and Arnhem Kent Kleur are in contact and occasionally visit each other’s meetings.

**“The main challenge for the Surinamese-Hindustani in Arnhem is to involve the next generation.”**

Two Holi and Diwali events in a small city is not necessarily a problem, however, (more) cooperation could help the safeguarding of their shared intangible cultural heritage.

There are also examples from other cities in the Netherlands. For example, APNA, a Hindustani Foundation in Rotterdam. They registered Holi Paghwa and Diwali at the Network for Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Netherlands and are in the process of making a next step, inscribing Holi at the National Inventory; this means a commitment to active safeguarding. APNA could also serve as an example for Ashna regarding the involvement of youngsters. In order to safeguard the Hindustani heritage in the Netherlands they decided to create a youth board. Furthermore, APNA’s approach is more outwards directed. On their website they state: ‘Our goal is to strengthen our beautiful Dutch society, without losing sight of our identity. We can enrich society with our traditions and rich culture. Our mission is to create solidarity with fellow citizens and other cultures regardless of their religious, ethnic or social background and age.’<sup>7</sup>

Creating a bigger Hindustani network in which different communities share ideas and experiences could also help the safeguarding of their common ICH. In this process, Ashna could profit from the more professionalized approach of APNA.

It is also interesting to return to the situation in The Hague – the city with the largest group of Hindustanis – where the municipality subsidizes the Holi celebration with the goal to ‘stimulate intercultural connections between the residents of The Hague’. In this superdiverse city, the local government acknowledges the importance of such festivities for the liveability and social cohesion in the city. Holi is a big and free event in a public park, open for anyone who wants to join. The organizers explain the value of the festivity as follows: ‘At the Holi celebration in The Hague, the intention is to have a citywide celebration. After all, Holi is a party for everyone, regardless of origin, colour or culture. It is a party that breaks through social barriers and tries to connect to all people in a cheerful and colourful way, both within the family context, the bigger environment, and within one’s own culture and beyond. Precisely because of this philosophy, Holi is preeminently a multicultural celebration that fits very well into the integration policy of the municipality of The Hague.’<sup>8</sup>

## Concluding thoughts

The focus of this paper was on the challenges to the travelling intangible cultural heritage of one specific ethnic community in a superdiverse city district, and subsequently their safeguarding practises. The above will be put in a broader perspective on the safeguarding of (Hindustani) intangible cultural heritage in the superdiverse context of Dutch cities. The main challenge for the Surinamese Hindustani in Arnhem is to involve the next generation, a challenge many ICH communities face, irrespectively of the place where they live. Often, intangible cultural heritage is dependent on elderly. However, for the Surinamese Hindustani there is an extra dimension because the first generation (now mostly above sixty years old)

grew up in a country where their ICH was a more common part of daily life. In contrast to their (grand) children, who grow up in superdiverse cities in western countries in which it is not (always) selfevident to experience Hindustani ICH in public life (although the recent decade this is changing). Therefore, for these next generations new adaptations or ICH from other traditions could be preferred. Furthermore, it appears that the next generations are more attracted to big social events compared to, for example, evenings with lectures about the Hindustani heritage. Nevertheless, the older generation wants to pass on their traditions and heritage. In order to do this successfully, two things need to be taken into account: (1) It has to be done in a way that is appealing to youngsters; and maybe even more important (2) There should be opportunities to encounter each other and interact. For example, dance nights, communal celebrations and festivals could be more appealing. Activities that provide opportunities to have a shared experience and intergenerational exchange. As a result, the next generations come into contact with the Hindustani heritage and the community in a different way and might develop a broader interest in other intangible cultural heritage. Advisably Ashna learns from or works together with other (Hindustani) communities. In this, APNA could be an example; they invited youngsters to form their own board within the organisation and collaborate with them.

And what about superdiversity? Building on the example of Malburgen, it is an open question if a new superdiverse context Hindustani culture is not so much celebrated in the public sphere but in the more (artificial?) context of a theatre or a community centre may contribute to an isolation of different cultural groups, that celebrate their ‘own’ cultural heritage. However, this may be counterbalanced by a younger generation that is more attracted to big social and cultural events that may encourage more intercultural exchange. Perhaps these younger generations are more ‘superdiverse’ than their parents. This is an issue that still is to be explored.

4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k1H50gHMnwo&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1hS3Nf6pCPACDFC7Thzg2m1W3tj66769D3z0IIMLo76KcBcGwPKXxxfnY>

5. <https://www.arnhemsekoerier.nl/activiteit/item/arnhem-kent-kleur-/671450>

6. <http://houvanarnhem.nl/festival-van-het-licht-druk-bezocht/>

7. <https://www.apna.at/>

8. <http://www.holisamen.nl/holi/>



All the same, the superdiverse context of the West-Kruiskade is different and involving youngsters is not really an issue (yet). There is a more or less shared responsibility for the intangible cultural heritage. Most celebrations are public events with organizers and visitors from different ethnicities. Furthermore, the ethnic diversity is also much more visible on the streets, while the Hindustani heritage in Malburgen is mainly experienced within the own ethnic community in a community centre that is less prominent in the streetscape. This is in line with the observation of the cultural brokers and social workers, who labelled Arnhem as a segregated city. In the process of safeguarding, these cultural brokers and social workers see a role for themselves because festivities such as Holi could also stimulate more social cohesion, which is an important goal for them.

A positive note for Ashna and the Hindustani heritage in the Netherlands is the fact that Holi became a public and subsidized festival in The Hague. The municipality motivates this subsidy as a tool for integration and inclusion. In a way this process can be seen in the West-Kruiskade as well, where the municipality subsidized projects to improve the neighbourhood, for example by forming a working group that facilitates the consultation between the different stakeholders. Of course, the Hindustani community could very well join the celebrations in The Hague or Rotterdam, however, these cities could also be an example for Arnhem. The city council of Arnhem – in collaboration with cultural brokers and social workers – could help to create a favourable environment in which ICH could thrive and by doing this also foster social cohesion and the development of the city.

**“The main challenge for the Surinamese Hindustani in Arnhem is to involve the next generation, a challenge many ICH communities face, irrespectively of the place where they live.”**

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ICH in Urban Contexts is a timely topic. Over half of the population of the world is now living in urban areas – cities with millions of inhabitants and diverse communities. Cities such as Bangkok, Singapore, Bogota and Rotterdam are facing multiple social and cultural challenges, not the least, due to processes of migration, the challenge of superdiversity and social cohesion.

While intangible cultural heritage is often presented as a mainspring for cultural diversity, what about intangible cultural heritage in an urban context? What is intangible cultural heritage in an urban context and how is it transmitted and safeguarded? How can it contribute to social cohesion and renewed dialogue among communities? Is there a role for city governments in adopting certain cultural policies?