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A cartographic approach to sustaining urban places through festivals as intangible cultural heritage

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ABSTRACT

This study draws on Deleuze and Guattari's principle of cartography to examine how urban places can be sustained through festivals as forms of intangible cultural heritage (ICH). To do so, we conceptualize festivals as maps that generate multiple connections between human and more-than-human worlds. We show that festivals are shaped by unstable, heterogeneous relations among bodies, discourses, and materialities that simultaneously de-territorialize and re-territorialize urban places. This understanding of festivals as fluid and living challenges neoliberal framings of ICH as static inheritance to be safeguarded and preserved - framings that may paradoxically undermine the sustainability of ICH itself along with the urban places in which ICH is enacted. Inspired by post-qualitative inquiry, we use two urban festivals in Sardinia, Italy, as exemplars to show how a cartographic approach to understanding ICH, through festivals, can inform urban policy and planning for more sustainable futures.

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Introduction

It is a truism that festivals have been intrinsic to human existence for centuries and generally reflect human cultures (Falassi, 1987). There has been a proliferation of festivals since the Second World War with no consensus on their definition (see Cudny, 2014 on the evolution of festivals). Notably, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998) argued that festivals are a mode of cultural production through exhibition and that the festival is “the showcase *par excellence* for the presentation of intangible heritage” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004, p. 57). Importantly, festivals are recognized by UNESCO as a comprehensive way to showcase different expressions of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) (UNWTO, 2012). Culture is now accepted as the fourth pillar of sustainable development (the others being social, economic and environmental) and important for sustainable urban development (Perry et al., 2020). Festivals, as ICH, are also appreciated as catalysers of change due to their potential to reveal latent

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dimensions of cities (Melis, 2020), and to unlock counter-narratives (Heath, 2018) to the mainstream neoliberal order. However, the processes through which change happens through festivals and how place is intertwined in such change remains understudied. Indeed, festivals, as manifestations of ICH are represented in the 2003 UNESCO Convention on ICH rather paradoxically as both a 'fragile inheritance' (UNESCO, n.d) and increasingly as a tool for sustaining places (Meissner, 2021). Of note here also is the fact that one of the targets in the UN Sustainable Development Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) states that it is necessary to 'strengthen efforts to protect and **safeguard** the world's cultural and natural heritage' (UNDP, n.d) (authors' emphasis).

We argue that this seemingly contradictory understanding of ICH camouflages a normative, neo-liberal framing of the past as complete and finite. In this sense, festivals, as ICH, are rendered non-living, flattening communities who enact these cultural events into mere bearers and transmitters of heritage. This is ultimately unsustainable for those places within which festivals are held. Perry et al. (2020) previously urged festival organisers to balance an imperative to conserve and protect cultural heritage with a flexible understanding of cultural heritage as active and evolving. In a separate paper we questioned the discursive techniques by which ICH was constructed as fragile and immaterial (Authors, 2021). We take these discussions further by applying cartography to challenge static, preservation-safeguarding-oriented approaches which negate an appreciation of ICH as living and as a complex past-present entanglement. Specifically, our aim is to illustrate how in the context of festivals, as ICH, the past is not complete and finite but rather it is re-located in the present and plays an active role, forging new and multiple connections between human and more-than-human worlds. This conceptualization of festivals opens possibilities for more sustainable futures for the urban places in which they are held by resisting neo-liberal agendas that seek to fix festivals in place and time. We illustrate this argument theoretically through the lens of cartography as explicated by Deleuze and Guattari.

Research in tourism studies has drawn extensively on the work of Deleuze and Guattari (Guia & Jamal, 2023; Hollinshead, 2021; Ivanova & Buda, 2020; Pavlovich, 2014), yet their concept of cartography has received limited attention. We argue that this concept can reveal contradictions within understandings of festivals as ICH, while offering alternative perspectives that can support more sustainable urban futures. According to Deleuze and Guattari, cartography is inspired by the idea of mapping which is considered as a generative tool (Tillmanns & Salomão Filho, 2020), that enables the exploration of spatial relations and networks and is not bounded by given points and directions. Cartography entails an open-ended (as opposed to a once and for all) and processual (as opposed to static) experiment for the understanding and mapping of places. Such mapping is fluid, dynamic and relational and accounts for the heterogeneous elements that constitute place itself including those that are of a more-than-human nature. By de-centring humans as the only ones capable of agency, a cartographic approach allows us to reconceptualize urban festivals (and urban places therewith) as assemblages, that is, networks constituted by multiple relations with discourses, materialities and bodies that are both human and more-than-human. We further show that maps can be reversible. In this context, we contend that festivals thus demonstrate how ICH can disrupt the physical and normative order of urban places, shifting them away from dominant Western-centric,

neoliberal, and anthropocentric discourses which are ultimately unsustainable. Such repositioning offers possibilities for urban policies and practices that can lead to more sustainable futures. Inspired by post-qualitative inquiry, we also present findings from empirical research at two urban festivals in Sardinia, Italy, as exemplars of how a cartographic approach can unsettle normative framings of ICH as requiring preservation and safeguarding.

Intangible cultural heritage and urban festivals

Intangible cultural heritage as a term was in fact introduced by UNESCO and further developed by the 2003 UNESCO Convention. Indeed, said Convention encouraged conversations around what constitutes ICH and how it can be preserved (see for example Skublewska-Paszkowska et al., 2022; Idris et al., 2017). Consequently, much of the literature on ICH reflects critically on its conceptualization by UNESCO. It is from this body of literature that the challenges around ICH safeguarding emerged, mainly due to its supposed fragile nature. Simultaneously, the 2003 Convention itself acknowledged the role of ICH in the sustainable development of places and communities while an emerging academic literature increasingly recognizes this role. Esfehiani and Albrecht (2018) examine the interaction of ICH with natural protected areas and how ICH contributes to their protection. Drawing on Bourdieu's capital theory Meissner (2021) explores the 'enabling' potentials of ICH for economic, social, and cultural development. In this sense, ICH can be interpreted as a form of cultural capital which in turn can be converted into social and economic capital. Similarly, Smuka (2016) explores how safeguarding cultural heritage encourages community awareness and sense of identity as well as economic and social development in the long term. Qiu (2023) calls ICH the "cultural soul" of cities and demonstrates how ICH can be used to differentiate cities in a context of identity crises. Liu and Xie (2024) illustrate the opportunities and challenges in safeguarding cultural heritage in processes of new urbanization. Tan et al. (2020) highlight how ICH can enhance local awareness and creativity through place attachment which in turn contributes to the sustainability of World Heritage Sites.

While a connection between ICH and sustainable development has been established, ICH is discussed at times as problematic (immaterial, fragile, fragmented) while at other times it is framed as instrumental to something else (e.g. sustainable development). We argue that ICH has been somehow disembodied and objectified by this narrative and despite the conversations on how ICH might contribute to sustainable development an actual account of the extent of the material connections (both human and more-than human) established with and in places is missing.

Critical festival literature explores the various ways in which the cultural interfaces the urban through festivals. In particular, the literature evidences the tensions between the organic origins of some cultural celebrations and the political agendas of cities (Henningesen & Røyseng, 2025). A trend of festivalization can be in fact observed in urban strategies. What this means is that festivals are purposefully used to achieve regeneration strategies spanning socio-cultural, place branding, economic and environmental aspects. While in many cases festivals were not created for such purposes but arose out of an organic need and desire by communities to celebrate beliefs,

customs, and traditions, it is now widely acknowledged that cultural festivals have the potential to support the regeneration of cities and particularly to encourage re-use and re-positioning of places (Finkel & Platt, 2020).

As such, it is the public phase of festivals that becomes the focus of funding and safeguarding policies. This however, risks neglecting all the other relationships that the festival establishes in time and space both pre and post the event experience and which might be unplanned and more organic. Festival practices in fact reflect their fluid nature (Giovanardi et al., 2014), which resist closure and bounded time-space coordinates. Burning Man is an example of a festival that developed into a wider cultural movement which exceeds in time and space the festival itself by offering regular events and meet-ups both in person and off-line (Rowen, 2020). Some of the material and immaterial elements of the festival keep on functioning after the programme ends. This festival flows in different directions, some of which are public and official, others private and domestic or virtual (Morey et al., 2016), underlying a latent presence of the event which resists the boundaries of the festival programme and its enactment.

It is undeniable that festivals are constituted by a choreography of heterogeneous elements. Indeed, there seems to be an increasing trend in literature exploring encounter and relationality within festival spaces as well as how such spaces are co-created with other attendees (Rihova et al., 2015; Wood & Kinnunen, 2020). While human agency is at the centre of all these studies, this does not give enough credence to other intersecting agents that are more-than-human, discarding their relationality and encounter. In fact, it is not only human beings that possess agentic capacity (Greenhough, 2010). More-than-human approaches in fact emphasize the idea that “agency – the capacity to produce effects” – (Lorimer & Hodgetts, 2024 p. 52) is shared across a diverse range of entities. Festivals might be shaped by humans’ lives and corporeality but also by non-human components that interact in various ways through their life worlds.

Our study applies cartography first to highlight relations between human and more-than-human elements at festivals, destabilizing anthropomorphic understandings of festivals, and second, to show that festivals as ICH have no clear beginning or end. By mapping their heterogeneous, embedded, and unstable relations, we demonstrate that these ICH expressions can support sustainable urban development when understood as performative cultural knowledge manifested through horizontal geo-relations.

Cartography and festivals

To understand cartography, it is fundamental to first understand neo-vitalist thinking, the concept of the rhizome and the complementary notion of arborescent thinking. The latter, we argue, informs the dominant understanding of ICH and prevents effective approaches to its sustainability. Deleuze and Guattari are regarded as neo-vitalist thinkers as their understanding of life stems from a re-interpretation of the concept of vitalism which was proposed by Henri Bergson in the early twentieth Century (Nail, 2023). In essence, neo-vitalism privileges an “idea of becoming over one of being, of movement over stasis, of action over structure, of flow and flux” (Lash, 2006, p. 323). If we think about this in the context of ICH it is notable that the dominant discourse

on ICH is characterized by a contrasting view of life – one that is static, which paralyzes ICH in the past and conceals the multiple relations ICH establishes in the present including those of a more-than-human nature. This in turn might conceal more effective ways to sustain such heritage as well as show how ICH might be a driver of sustainability.

Melis and Chambers (2021) contend that while ICH is defined by UNESCO documents as *living* culture, there are two main timeframes used to speak about it – the past (inheritance) and safeguarding for the future (transmission). In the 2003 UNESCO ICH Convention, the enactors of cultural heritage are seen as bearers and carriers of this inheritance rather than as the embodiment of cultural heritage in the present (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004). Thus, uses of heritage in the present, are sidelined (Smith, 2006). This discursive practice renders the role of cultural heritage expressions in the present predictable as they are regarded as reproductions of the past, outside of time itself, unable to play any creative role (DeLanda, 1998). This reproduces a timeless, static picture of cultural heritage and reveals the inadequacy of disciplines investigating the role of the past in the present “to ask meaningful questions about how people use the past as a contemporary cultural resource” (Smith & Campbell, 2015, p. 445). This static image of cultural heritage reflects, following Deleuze and Guattari (1988), an arborescent system of representation.

Arborescent systems of thought privilege linear paths that direct thought with limited possibility to spread in novel directions (Mazzei & McCoy, 2010). It is possible to imagine arborescent systems as tree-like structures of thought that privilege roots and histories, which determine predictable patterns and create categories and binary oppositions. The concept of inheritance within cultural heritage, can be regarded as the trunk of this tree-like structure. According to Russell (2010), to imbue cultural heritage with values of inheritance is the consequence of the adoption of arborescent paradigms (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988) characterized by linear growth and progress (e.g., time, reference to a specific historical narrative), binary relations (those who inherit/those who don't), and dualistic modes of thought (e.g., tangible/intangible cultural heritage).

The concept of the rhizome is used by Deleuze and Guattari (1988) as a counterpoint, albeit not in opposition to arborescent paradigms and describes more creative, and unpredictable patterns of thought. A rhizome, an image borrowed from botanical sciences, identifies a species that rather than emanating from a centre (such as the trunk of a tree), establishes multiple nodes, overspilling in manifold directions. While the image of the tree privileges pre-existing structures (as noted in the arborescent concept), the rhizome is always in an emergent status as it contacts experience. Such an emergent status characterizes cultural heritage (Russell, 2010, Ivanova & Buda, 2020) which can be understood as not having a fixed shape, but which is instead in continuous transformation. Cultural heritage in this sense can therefore be perceived as resisting representation and final attempts at signification. Similarly, festivals, as expressions of ICH, can be seen as rhizomes, which enable an understanding of ICH as turbulent, unstable and constituted by multiple materialities (associated with human and more-than-human elements) (Anderson & Wylie, 2009).

Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome is constituted of six principles which describe its structure. Cartography is the fifth principle where the rhizome is

“understood to be a map and not a tracing” (Young, 2013, p. 1418). Unlike a tracing, a map is entirely oriented toward experimentation as it necessarily encounters real experiences (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988). Maps, being oriented toward experimentation “have multiple entryways; they are open and connectable, detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, p. 12). In this context, we contend that festivals as ICH, can be perceived as maps that provide hubs for the emergence of different identities, places, materialities and temporalities. Festivals can thus be regarded through the lens of cartography, as composed of moving, multiple heterogenous connections.

A cartographic approach to festivals as ICH is ideal as it regards festivals as constituting multiple interactions between discourses and materialities that are associated with the human and the more-than-human world. As such, festivals have a creative potential characterized by constant change and multiple mutations that liberate them from fixed relations— a process that Deleuze and Guattari call ‘de-territorialization’. Through this process of constant change, festivals create something new—they become as Deleuze and Guattari suggest ‘re-territorialized’. Within festivals de-territorialization and re-territorialization occur simultaneously and both processes are important for sustainability. Deleuze and Guattari’s ideas thus provide a fresh perspective on festivals as ICH that are important when considering their role in the sustainability of urban places. Later on, our discussion of the two exemplar Sardinian cases will illustrate the potential of festivals to induce change (de-territorialization) within the urban environment (Melis, 2020) and re-purpose (re-territorialization) the normative use of urban places.

Further, instead of asking what ICH *is*, applying a cartographic approach is informed by the following questions about ICH within urban places: what does ICH *do*? How does it come into being (Hillier, 2011)? How is it *actualized* (Hillier, 2011)? This pattern of thought involves an intellectual shift, for the emphasis is not on “meaning making” but instead on “function and use” (Zayani, 2000, p. 95). Consistent with a neo-vitalist philosophy attention is on flow rather than fixed reality of meaning and significance. Moreover, attention is directed towards something that is emerging, therefore, to a degree, indeterminate, never fully knowable. Hence attention is directed towards forces such as desire and affect. By privileging sensation and feeling, “affect displaces reason/emotion; mind/body; self/other binaries” (Taylor & Fullagar, 2022, p. 8). Desire characterizes both entities that are human and more-than-human (e.g., non-human animals and social institutions). These forces are vital to life as they produce change.

The attention towards change and movement implies that the emphasis is on the process rather than the product of such movements. In arborescent systems festivals are unavoidably objectified and depicted as static entities; often a festival as an expression of ICH is identified with its exhibition. Less focus is on other aspects that concern the festival before, during and after and that are unseen by the audience. Less focus is on those elements that reside in the realm of feelings, desire and sensations which are often unspeakable and therefore neglected. It is the ceaseless tension of these productive forces that to Deleuze produces movements of change characterized by processes of becoming, which makes life a constant experimentation. As Guattari puts it, a “map is opposed to the structure; it can open itself in all its dimensions; it can also be ripped apart; it can be adapted to all kinds of assemblies”

(Guattari, 1979, p. 172). Deleuze and Guattari's cartography can embrace evolution, rupture, and interruptions. Our contention is that such a cartographic approach to festivals is integral to the sustainability of the urban places within which they are held.

Cartography as disruptive, post-qualitative inquiry

Our cartographic approach to conceptualising festivals as ICH lies within the framework of post-qualitative inquiry (Lather, 2013; MacLure, 2013; St Pierre, 2021) which provides the inspiration for our examination of the exemplars of two Sardinian urban festivals, - the Candelieri Descent (hereafter only Candelieri) and the Sartiglia. Sardinia is an Italian island in the Mediterranean (see Figure 1).

These two festivals are at different stages of UNESCO recognition, and this fact constituted the criteria for their inclusion in this study: the Candelieri was nominated as an expression of ICH by UNESCO in 2013. The Sartiglia is included in the inventory

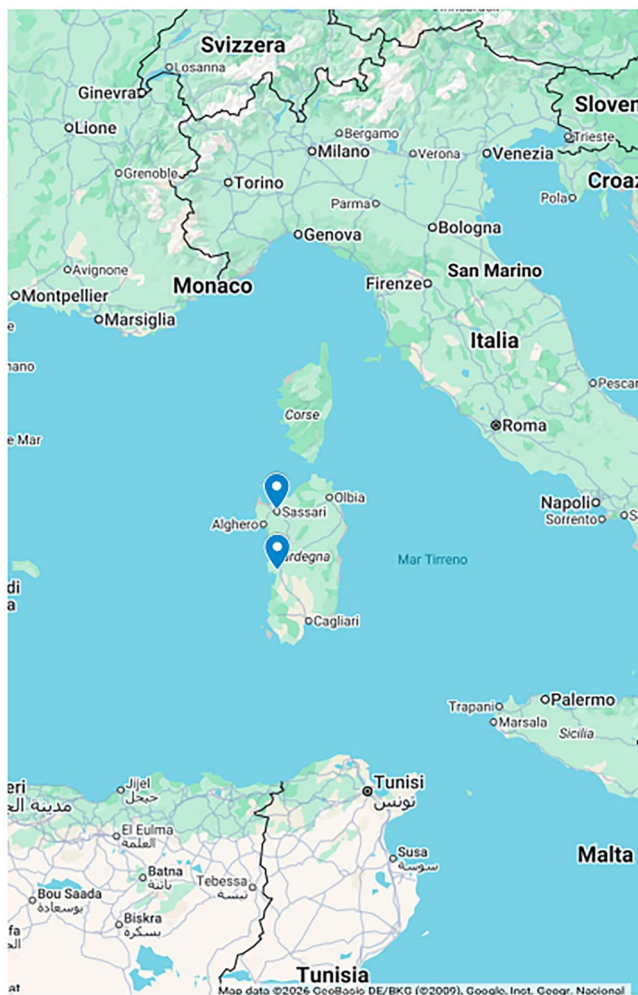


Figure 1. A Map of Sardinia showing the study regions. Source: Authors' editing from google maps.

of UNESCO's ICH and is a candidate for nomination. The Candelieri (a candelieri is a four-meter shoulder borne processional structure shaped as an obelisk) takes place in the city of Sassari (North Sardinia) on the 14th of August. Celebrated for over 700 years (Caredda, 2010) it is a votive ritual honouring the Virgin Mary for freeing the city of three terrible plagues, the last of which was in 1652 when almost all the population of Sassari died. The protagonists of this celebration are the guilds, representing the ancient arts and crafts corporations that originated in Spain. There are nine guilds in Sassari and the big, heavy obelisks or candelieri are carried by a team of bearers representing each guild. As they move forward, holding the heavy processional structures, they engage in a sort of dance.

Like the Candelieri, in the Sartiglia the guilds are amongst the main protagonists. In Oristano (Western Sardinia), the city in which Sartiglia is performed on the last Sunday and Tuesday of Carnival, there are two main guilds: the peasants (protected by St. John) and the carpenters (protected by St. Joseph). The Sartiglia might be considered as a typology of ring jousting tournaments that became very popular in the 15th and 16th centuries. There are two other central protagonists within the Sartiglia: the *Componidori* and the horsemen. The *Componidori* is the central figure and the head of the tournament and most of the attention is dedicated to them. First time attendees to the Sartiglia festival will become immediately aware of the assemblage of the sounds and colors that characterize the festival, significantly transforming the urban space. A horse-riding circuit is provisionally laid out in the city center, delineated by barriers, and the urban pavement is covered with sand. Stands are erected to accommodate the audience. As typical of urban events, roads are closed to vehicular traffic. What is more interesting, however, is the appearance of a non-human element in the urban environment: the presence of horses ridden by masked knights wearing flamboyant and colorful costumes. While the two festivals have similar characteristics such as the centrality of the guilds and legacy of the Spanish domination, they also have some differences: the Candelieri originated as a sacred celebration to renew the vow to the Virgin Mary. While showing religious elements, the Sartiglia was originally a star joust for the entertainment of governors of that time (Caredda, 2010).

We use St. Pierre (2021) concept of post-qualitative inquiry as the inspiration for this study. This approach emphasises critical engagement with philosophical concepts, such as cartography, enabling us to consider new understandings of ICH rather than being confined by questions of method, process, and technique that can limit progressive insights from the outset. Post-qualitative inquiry has no fixed procedure; it rejects pre-existing methodologies and instead embraces anti-methods. Research which adopts post-qualitative inquiry can nevertheless be ethnographic, involving participant observation, and semi-structured interviews. For this study, ethnographic fieldwork was undertaken at both festivals between Spring 2016 and Autumn 2017. At both festivals, the first author engaged and conversed with participants about their activities, movements, and behaviours with the aim of understanding how the space of the festivals was constructed provisionally and temporally. Conversations with participants were also aimed at attaining a multi-vocal account of the festivals. The researcher in this context is part of the festival assemblage, engaging in its material-discursive unfolding (Taylor & Bozalek, 2022). The ethnographic method was

informed by a more-than- representational (Lorimer, 2005), and a Deleuzian-Guattarian neo-vitalist approach. The first author immersed herself in the festivals' practices, experiences, and emotions. This approach was used to understand how ICH is constructed and manifested through embodied performance at both festivals.

Theoretical sampling (Crang & Cook, 2007) informed the choice of participants. This approach is based on the selection of an appropriate group of people who are concerned or involved with the research problem. Therefore, it is not representativeness that counts but rather the "quality and positionality" (Crang & Cook, 2007, p. 14) of the information that the selected participants can provide. For each festival, performers, attendees, festival organizers and on some occasions, members of local institutions were interviewed either before, during or after the festival. This study is part of a broader project which collected a total of 34 semi-structured interviews with festival attendees, performers, and organizers (24 at the Sartiglia and 10 at the Candelieri). For this specific paper however, only the interviews with the festival performers (16 in total) are considered. Far from establishing a binary opposition between festival attendees and festival performers, this study regards everyone interacting with the festival as "performer" (including the first author herself). Participants who gave permission are identified with their real names, those who did not are instead identified with pseudonyms or their role at the festival.

All the interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim and then translated from Italian into English. NVivo was used to store and organize the data for analysis but was not used for coding purposes. Coding would in fact be inconsistent with a post-qualitative cartographic approach because it would identify an interpretative mode of thinking (which we are questioning) through which experience is extracted from reality and reconducted into known categories. We propose a post-qualitative analysis in which interpretive questions such as: "What does it mean?" are replaced by "What does this text produce?" (Colebrook, 2002:8). Such a way of thinking is more attentive to "those *bodymind* faculties that register smell, touch, level, temperature, pressure, tension and force (Taguchi, 2012, p. 272) in the interconnections emerging between different matter, matter and discourse, in the event of engagement with data. Instead of reading the data and coding therefore, the invitation is to read "with" the data which we understand as a discursive-material constitutive force affecting the researchers' thinking.

In line with this, Masny (2014) invites researchers conducting ethnography to read data intensively and immanently: "Reading intensively is the moment at which there is an untimely de-territorialization and reading immanently sets-off unpredictable potential connections in an assemblage" (Masny, 2014, p. 358). In other words, following Masny, reading data intensively suspends any previous knowledge of the subject under discussion and embraces disrupting statements, events and behaviours in a constant "unlearning" and "unknowing" (Taylor & Bozalek, 2022, p. 89). Reading the festivals immanently in this study meant a predisposition to capture the hybrid connections that can emerge in festival assemblages between the human and more-than-human. This reading of the festivals is entirely in keeping with a post-qualitative approach as is the way we analysed the materials. That is, both authors examined the festivals with mindbody openness to aspects that could have disrupted our previous understanding of cultural heritage, festivals and urban places. We also

attempted to suspend what is assumed as natural and given about cultural heritage such as the need for safeguarding as well as the idea of inheritance. In so doing we prepared ourselves to accept a de-territorialization of previous understandings of festivals as expressions of ICH, therefore “becoming with” the data. From this process emerged three main themes which are discussed below - ‘*festivals as outside of time*’; ‘*festivals as emotions and more-than-human*’; and ‘*festivals as repetition and rupture*’.

Findings and discussion

Festivals as outside of time

For some research participants, memories of the past materialize in spontaneous gestures that are performed during the festivals and are not part of a script. Following a cartographic approach, we understand that the festival performances unfold not as fixed but fluid, guided by affective feelings expressed by the performers. Memories, affectively triggered by the material assemblage of the festivals, suggest that idiosyncratic pasts co-exist with the present and are actualized through the festivals (Hamilakis & Jones, 2017). For Manuela, the Sartiglia festival stimulated memories of past familial connections which were experienced through performance in the present:

Researcher: *What are the best memories of this year's festival for you?*

Manuela: *When we have almost arrived at the guild headquarters... I turn to look for the presence of my grandma who would usually see us passing by in procession. She passed away three years ago. I turn, and I wave my hand to greet her*

Manuela is the coordinator of the dressing of the *Componidori* and her wave, which is not part of the choreography of the festival, is a gesture that she performs while imagining her grandmother's absent presence (Goulding et al., 2018). Manuela's personal memories of her grandmother are entangled with her collective memory of past festivals and festival performers resulting in spontaneous performative social interactions in the present. The festival thus becomes a contingent co-presence of a range of different temporal moments, past and present. We previously suggested that the present dimension of ICH is often marginalized compared to the past (inheritance) and the future (safeguarding) dimensions, emphasizing static representations, more amenable to inventorying. However, for Deleuze, past and present co-exist and a specific past is triggered by material arrangements of the present (Hamilakis & Jones, 2017). Failing to recognise this co-existence prevents effective sustainability approaches that account for how the past dialogues with the present and what urban material social spaces are involved in this process.

Memories reflect the fluid nature of festivals, which resist a shape. Memories also underline the everyday presence of the festival which resists the boundaries of the festival programme and exhibition. The boundaries of the festival are unclear, and following the rhizome, the festival lies constantly in a latent state. The end of the festival programme does not mean the end of the festival. Some of the festival's material and immaterial elements keep functioning after the festival's official programme ends. Participants were asked when the festival starts and ends, and it was clear from some of their responses that the festival has no beginnings and no

endings - it simply flows in different directions. Some of these directions are public and official, others private and domestic:

Researcher: *When does Sartiglia start for you?*

Maurizio: *It does not.*

Researcher: *When does it end?*

Maurizio: *It does not start or end. Not a day goes by without being Sartiglia. [...] that I don't linger in front of a painting [depicting scenes of Sartiglia] at home. Not a day goes by that I, walking along Cathedral Road, I don't think about it - sometimes I find myself doing the star joust with my bike when I ride nearby*

Francesco: *It does not have a starting or ending point, when a Sartiglia comes to an end, another one is starting*

According to Best and Kellner (1991, p. 100) "There is no beginning or end to rhizomatic lines, they are always in the middle of dynamic movement". Rhizomes have a cartographic nature in that a map does not have a boundary but rather, consists of an ensemble of multiple possibilities. Because the festival does not have a beginning or end it lacks an essence that can be represented. Nonetheless, the festival exhibition and programme have a beginning and an end, and this is what is often considered as the main target of safeguarding approaches and very often therefore, festivals are identified with their exhibition. This suggests an arborescent paradigm which depicts festivals as predictable and fixed. By thinking with the accounts of Maurizio and Francesco, we were able to appreciate an alternative discourse – that is that festivals are not bound in place and time but constitute a functional network (Castells, 2010) that exceeds these categories suggesting that effective sustainability approaches must take into account the scope and breadth of the time/space relations established by the festival.

Festivals as emotions and the more-than-human

Festivals are powerful catalyzers of change within the urban environment. The urban landscape is often revisited, opening opportunities for different material social interactions as well as spatial possibilities (a high street turned into a horse-riding circuit), re-purposing the normative use of the urban space assemblage itself, opening possibilities for its creative re-use. A cartographic approach to the urban festival assemblage suggests that festivals, as expression of ICH, have "smoothing" properties in that they are powerful catalyzers of change thanks to the disruption of the urban space's fixed relations.

Movements of de-territorialization and re-territorialization are triggered by forces of desire and affect, both of which are neglected in research and are often not granted any political credibility. Following Russell (2010), the Authors (2021) suggest that ICH is underpinned by the notion of inheritance and that two notions (heritage and inheritance) often converge. This discursive practice marginalizes the role of affective relations established in the present which are by nature idiosyncratic, and unpredictable, therefore not amenable to inventorying. Cultural heritage through festivals emerges as beyond inheritance and emerge as assemblages made up of multiple

dimensions governed by affect and the desire of participants. While the interviews reflect the sense of inheritance, there are other aspects that surface beyond inheritance:

Researcher: Can you tell me about your experience of this year's Sartiglia?

Maurizio: It is tiring, but it is joyful because for us Sartiglia is not on [Carnival] Sunday and [Shrove] Tuesday... [it is] a year-long preparation and cohabitation with my stable mates ... the relationship with the horse

Researcher: Can you tell me about your experience at the Sartiglia?

Fabio: Rich in emotions...as usual... Sartiglia is a collective emotion.

Thinking with the horsemen as cited in these last quotes, we sense the emergence of the festival as a field of horizontal relations not only with the past but in the present. We sense relations with other participants, stablemates, and groups that are not directly involved during the enactment of the festival (such as the families of the participants). This year-long commitment of people towards Sartiglia and this sense of collective emotion is the expression of a communion of intents, a feeling of solidarity that emerges frequently in the data. Anthropologist Muehlbach calls for a materialist repositioning of this feeling of solidarity with the urban environment and its relationship with its heritage. "Working with a materialist conception of solidarity thus means accounting for bodies and embodiment, rhythm and refrain, as well as for the built environment and infrastructure [...] bodies and their movement together are generative of political feeling and action" (Muehlebach, 2017, p. 116). In other words, failing to account for all these material relations built by the community through performance risks that such solidarity and communion are instrumentalized by neoliberal urban agendas. A focus on relations of solidarity and communion re-establish credence to collectives involved in the festivals, providing a counter narrative to neoliberal urban agendas through a system of local agency and collective care that deserve attention and appropriate support.

Also noticeable are the relations that are more-than-human. Giuseppe, a veterinary and horse rider explains that he can understand the horse's wellbeing through the animal's heartbeat which he can perceive through physical contact with the animal.

Giuseppe: In order to be a good horse rider one should also be a good veterinary to understand what the horse wants. I am very lucky because I can understand the horse thanks to what I studied... the horse does not speak but it communicates through signs and I can interpret those signs...We have also conducted a scientific study with the university to understand the horse behavior and to be able to translate those signs into words and then be able to communicate with them is our great achievement. I am able to understand when for the horse it is a pleasant experience and when it is not.

The relation with the horse reveals a more-than-human world which contributes to a heterogeneous assemblage (Haldrup & Larsen, 2006). Indeed, it is not only human beings that possess agentic capacity (Greenhough, 2010): the festival in this case is shaped by humans' lives and corporeality but also, by non-human living beings that interact in various ways through their life-worlds. However, within the context of ICH, representation and discourse have been dominated by concepts of inheritance and safeguarding, resulting in disembodied and objectified bodies and objects that neglect the agency and power of the more-than-human. The festival is a catalyzer of change

thanks to the multiple heterogenous connections it establishes in the present. Space becomes altogether an assemblage, an arrangement of human and non-human and different space-time dimensions. Simultaneously, domestic spaces become geographies of re-enchantment, such as the house of the farmers' guild's chief, home of the moving ceremony of the dressing of *Su Componidori*. This ceremony symbolizes the guild chief's metamorphosis from man to a semi-deity. This re-enchantment is reflected in this passage from the first author's field diary:

I could feel the tension of people in the hall when the horse entered the room: the drums and trumpets stop playing; everyone is silent because we have been asked to do so in order not to irritate the horse, but the silence is throttled by the emotion of what we have just witnessed. The horse is guided towards the table where the Componidori is standing. With a quick and expert movement, he climbed on the horse and suddenly, they had left the room. I can't describe the emotion at the surreal, dreamlike vision of a masked knight who climbed on a horse in a closed room and then rode away.

A cartographic reading of the festival revealed further dimensions that cannot be rationalized. Very often research participants are incapable of explaining their feelings: these are often expressed with vague affirmations such as "*I don't know how to describe it*" or "*It is an emotion*" confirming that this dimension is almost impossible to verbalize. This dimension uses as the first resource a combined sensory register which includes the whole body and not just cognitive cerebral functions. An example is given by Paolo, a priest and knight at the Sartiglia who is similarly lost for words when he describes his emotions when catching the star. The star joust involves knights with a sword in full gallop, who seek to 'catch' a star suspended by a green ribbon. Catching the star is regarded as a sign of good fortune for the town for the upcoming year. In reading this passage we open our mind-body to the sensory register and particularly the tactile feeling described by Paolo when the star touched his hand: only in that moment did he understand that he had caught the star. Paolo's tactile sensation provides an alternative route to apprehend his experience (Pons, 2007; Scriven, 2019). The mask worn by the knights acts as a non-human carnivalesque element that contributes to the disguise but also helps to obscure strong emotions generated by the star joust:

Researcher: *What does Sartiglia represent to you?*

Paolo: *For me Sartiglia is first and foremost emotion.*

Researcher: *Could you elaborate on this?*

Paolo: *I will just say I have understood the real function of the mask the day I caught the star for the first time ...because I caught it right at the centre...what happens when you catch the star right at the centre? That you are not able to touch it until the end when it reaches the sword's hilt and you are not able to see it either but the touch of the star into the sword ... tac [he simulates the sound] then I saw the star spinning and so ...so I remember shouting, crying, and laughing at the same time ...hmm...then you understand how lucky you are to have a mask on.*

Paolo's words at the beginning are quite vague: he cannot rationalize the emotion. This can only be articulated through the performance itself, and the sensorial register of touching, hearing and feeling, thus confirming the fact that the only footprint of

this pre-discursive dimension that remains is bodily, and performative. This pre-discursive, unspeakable layer is explored by Thrift (2000) as forces and intensities, identified as magical, mystical, and sublime and therefore, ineffable, beyond rationality. What Thrift calls bare life refers to what remains invisible “a space of time [which] is a vast biopolitical domain that blinks between action and performance” (Thrift, 2000, p. 39). Bare life forces can ‘re-enchant’ lives and places. However, these forces have been neglected once again by the operating social discourse informing cultural heritage which focuses on what can be rationalized and spoken about. This point further emerges in a passage with one of the performers of the Sartiglia, Maurizio, when he explains the otherworldly, sublime feeling of catching the star:

Researcher: *What does catching the star mean to you?*

Maurizio: *To catch the star means to have the ability and also to be lucky enough to have the opportunity to do so and to catch the target which is also the symbol of Sartiglia...when the Compondori catches the star is certainly the highest moment of the whole festival. I always say...I could die tomorrow I have family, I have fulfilled many desires in my life, but that ... ranks it on a higher, separate level.*

Researcher: *On a higher level?*

Maurizio: *Yes, I think so...*

Researcher: *Can you tell me more about that?*

Maurizio: *This higher level is a sublime feeling, it is something intangible because...everyone can get married, have kids, material satisfactions but this...this is something that gets lost in ...I think this is something that lists you among the many that marked the Sartiglia's history and that history of the town as well.*

The reason/emotion divide is questioned leaving space to an assemblage in which feelings can be rethought as entangled with the materiality of the festival and experience expands involving *thinkingdoingfeeling worlds* (Taylor & Fullagar, 2022, p. 15). We sense that many worlds coalesce (Scriven, 2019) - the human and more-than-human, i.e. the masks, the swords, the horses, the material and the otherworldly. The combined action of these elements contributes to a re-enchantment of the urban space. ICH through the festival counteracts neoliberal, hyper rationalised, placeless (Relph, 1976) urban spaces turning them into unique affective spaces of awe, wonder and sublime feelings.

Festivals as repetition and rupture

We have so far portrayed festivals as ICH as a heterogenous composition, an assemblage of discursive and non-discursive practices and energies that refuse signifying attempts. Yearly repetition gives the festival the opportunity to negotiate and rework this composition every time the festival is performed, resisting a once and for all signification and structure. This contrasts with the fact that often festivals present a similar structure that can be associated with a tracing (a bounded, given path). The tracing is in fact still present but thanks to repetition it is reintroduced on the map to be reworked every year. Through the interviews, we understood how the festivals

had evolved over time and how it felt for these to be repeated every year. Paolo (an archivist from the Candelieri's descent) explains that the guilds have shifted their function from professional corporations to religious societies. Paolo is also a member of the team responsible for the nomination of the Candelieri's descent as a UNESCO ICH expression, awarded in 2013:

Researcher: What do the guilds represent today?

Paolo: I sustain the idea... of the 'religious deviation' that has characterized the guilds because the working sphere was progressively vanishing and therefore they resorted to the devotional sphere as this was the only one left

Paolo explains how the devotional narrative has replaced the professional one as many professional figures (such as the wayfarers) no longer exist. As mentioned before, it has been affirmed that the past gains a second life as heritage through exhibition (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004). Following a cartographic approach, and the principle of asignifying rupture of the rhizome, "A rhizome may be broken, shattered at a given spot, but it will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, p. 9). Points of rupture are the way change manifests itself when encountering present needs and circumstances. However, discursive practices such as inventorying and safeguarding once again struggle to embrace the evolving nature of ICH (Suntikul, 2018), and change is regarded in problematic terms (Authors, 2021). Effective sustainability practices must embrace change and regard it as the very nature of such heritage practices. A focus on this processual dialogue with the urban space, as opposed to a focus on the meaning of festivals should be considered in sustainable cultural policies. Failure to do this risks destabilizing the livingness of cultural practices. For example, in 2016 the Butchers' guild participated in the Candelieri for the first time. The introduction of the Butcher's guild in the procession was not a linear process as the change was not unanimously accepted by the other guilds and the local Curia (the local representative of the Roman Catholic Church) on the grounds that butchers were never part of the procession. A conversation with a performer and anthropologist who participated in the nomination of the procession as a UNESCO ICH expression revealed that the change had to be authorized by UNESCO and by the group of processions that have been nominated with the Candelieri:

Researcher: Was UNESCO involved in the decision to include a new guild?

Chiara: When the guilds together with the council reached consensus on the matter it followed a request to the Director as well as to the UNESCO referent. They said that it is on the festive community to decide, so changes are welcome as long as they are shared by the community.

The fact that communities must ask for UNESCO's authorization to introduce changes not only reveals that UNESCO is regarded as a keeper of the past (Smith, 2006) but also that change within ICH sits uncomfortably with the UNESCO narrative focused on inheritance and safeguarding and that such a narrative has become also embodied by the performing community itself. Because of the annual repetition of the festival, and the consequent encounter with heterogeneous discourses, bodies and materialities, the festival emerges as unstable and ever changing (Deleuze, 1994). Feelings of difference, of the festival that never stays the same

are also expressed by other performers at the Sartiglia (here identified as drummer and trumpet player), revealing that even though from the exterior the festival might look similar, feelings (also part of the festival assemblage) never stay the same:

Researcher: *How does it feel to repeat the festival every year?*

Drummer: *It might seem repetitive, but it is not, for people from Oristano it is always different*

Trumpet player: *Every year is a different emotion.*

Researcher: *Could you elaborate on that?*

Drummer: *Because emotions are always different.*

Trumpet player: *It feels different every year as someone from Oristano because you enter inside the festivals in a different way, there are always different people which create a different festa...a different environment... but the story behind is to me different every year*

Elements of the festival act as catalysing affective energies that do not force the festival or the narrative into a certain direction but are rather used as reference points into a map that can be reached using multiple paths, playgrounds in which to experiment and rework different inner narratives every time the festival is performed. The festival becomes a dynamic, generative (Hollinshead et al., 2021) geography, a map open to experimentation. This experimental aspect emerged at several points in the conversations as revealed in a comment from one of the drummers at the Sartiglia festival who pointed out that even though the festival and the performative rituals are hundreds of years old “*new tracks are introduced every year and presented before the festival on special occasions*”.

Festival assemblages therefore have inherent creative potential. Viewing festivals as maps makes it possible to understand the multiple horizontal relations they generate in the present. One such dimension is rupture: the new lines that open each time a festival is repeated. These lines create opportunities to experiment with and rework narratives, ideas, and practices in response to the creative energy of the past as it emerges in the present.

Conclusion

Although this section ends the paper, cartography itself cannot have a conclusion. Consistent with Deleuze and Guattari's thought and post-qualitative inquiry, this work aims not to draw conclusions but to generate new questions and maps for further experimentation. Conversations with participants in the two exemplar events revealed festivals' multiple discursive, pre-discursive, human, and more-than-human dimensions. Our post-qualitative approach enabled us to identify the human and more-than-human agencies, including horses and material objects, that together constitute festival assemblages.

By following a cartographic approach, we identified the principles that inform our current understanding of festivals. We identified the notion of inheritance and safeguarding as two principles that constrain ICH into a static representation, and which

fail to recognize the connections, established in the present, that allows the past to play a creative role in the here and now (DeLanda, 1998). A cartographic approach enables the present to reclaim its political significance. In particular, the empirical materials revealed that urban festivals are fluid, their boundaries not easily detectable, due to the entanglements established with the lives of participants. ICH emerges as a reality that is constantly evolving, one that defies any attempts at signification. The repetition of the festival is an opportunity for generating the new. Yet, this 'newness' sits uncomfortably with UNESCO's neoliberal narrative around safeguarding (Authors, 2021). Festivals are revealed to enable physical and social changes within the urban environment which continue long after the festival. As such, the normative, neoliberal order, focused on fixity and closure, is altered.

Mapping festivals as ICH through cartography has important implications for heritage managers and urban policymakers. For heritage managers, it offers critical insights into the social and cultural significance of festivals, establishing a foundation for interventions that can really empower communities who wish to sustain their living traditions. Festivals are at risk of becoming obsolescent without the re-territorializing of space with its endogenous potentialities as unveiled by the material arrangement of the festivals themselves. Urban planning policies for ICH should follow a cartographic approach, where instead of thinking about what festivals **are**, they should instead consider what festivals **do**. That is, what virtualities does the festival unveil that need to be considered in broader sustainable urban planning. As mentioned in the introduction to this paper, Goal 11 of the UN SDGs speaks to the need to have more sustainable cities and communities. However, in this Goal it is posited that one way of achieving this is through safeguarding culture and heritage which reinforces neoliberal, arborescent narratives. A cartographic approach challenges discourses of safeguarding as occluding the living nature of festivals as intangible cultural heritage. Recognising the 'livingness' of festivals empowers urban policymakers to resist neo-liberal understandings and to develop more agile planning policies that take account of festivals' fluid, heterogenous and relational nature. The marketing and promotional strategies for urban festivals should also highlight the way in which festivals connect past, present and future, the human and the more- than- human, in continually evolving interconnections. Our findings from the two exemplar festivals also revealed relations of solidarity and communion which lend credence to the collectives involved in the festivals, thus providing a counter narrative to neoliberal urban agendas through a system of local agency and collective care that deserve attention and appropriate support.

Admittedly, Deleuze and Guattari's ideas are complex and difficult to fully distil within a journal article. However, applying cartography to festivals as ICH contributes to theory on intangible cultural heritage, while the two Sardinian urban festival exemplars empirically illustrate our arguments and their sustainability implications. Yet, further research might wish to similarly explore other urban festivals focusing on aspects of post-industrial decline and depopulation which due to space limitations we were unable to properly unpack in this paper. We also suggest more longitudinal studies of festivals which can 'test' how a cartographic approach, when applied to urban policy and heritage planning, contributes to increased sustainability within cities.

Ethical considerations

This study received ethical approval from the University of Sunderland (University of Sunderland Research Committee) where the research was originally undertaken.

Author contributions

CRedit: **Claudia Melis**: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing; **Donna Chambers**: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing.

Consent to participate

All participants were provided with an information sheet and consent form. Consent was obtained in writing. All respondents gave permission to disclose their identity and for the results of the study to be published.

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