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(Inter)Cultural Heritage and Inclusion for Migrants – Bridging the Gap

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Cultural Heritage, Migration and Identity Politics

Cultural heritage has traditionally been studied within two realms: that of the nation-state, and that of other institutionalising bodies such as UNESCO. Scholars have highlighted a tendency in the area of heritage to prioritise heritage practitioners and the state over heritage users in the heritage creation processes (Harrison 2013). Works by critical heritage scholars, such as Laurajane Smith's (2016; 2021), have enabled a critical approach to these institutionalised discourses on heritage, oriented towards the listings and canonising of what deserves to be heritage. The thaw introduced by the development of critical heritage studies has enabled a shift from heritage as an 'authorised discourse' to other forms of heritage practices. This 'performative turn' in heritage studies (Harrison 2013; Macdonald 2013; Smith 2016) has encouraged scholars to look at heritage beyond institutional lenses. In doing so, the materiality of heritage has been questioned (yet not rejected – see Smith 2016). Monuments, heritage sites and landscapes have started to be seen as a pretext for performing heritage and the main focus of critical heritage scholars has shifted to the actions of individuals and groups when engaging with heritage. This has further relegated heritage objects and sites to the role of supporting heritage processes, rather than its core focus. The processual nature of heritage has been recognised and highlighted, along with its dependence on meaning-making and the mobilisations/actions of the individuals engaging with it. In other words, what people do with heritage, what meaning it gains through the everyday negotiations of its users, has become more important than its materiality and the institutionalised narratives about it.

While this performative shift (or critical turn, see Winter 2013) in heritage studies has obviously not led to the end of scholarship on institutionalised heritage, it has enabled the acknowledgement of alternative meanings of heritage and grassroots heritage performances within a broader heritage discourse. It was also a significant step in freeing heritage from the constraints of methodological nationalism (Byrne 2016). Mainstream heritage studies have increasingly analysed heritage that goes beyond coined norms, including the ethno-national isomorphism of culture (Gupta and Ferguson 2008). The interplay between Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD, see: Smith 2016), and grassroots, alternative, individual heritage performances was well grasped by Smith:

However, alongside this professional and authorised discourse is also a range of popular discourses and practices. Some of these may take their cue from or be influenced by the professional discourse, but they will not necessarily be reducible to it (Purvis and Hunt 1993). Some discourses may also challenge, either actively or simply through their existence, the dominant discourse. (Smith 2016: 16)

Viewing heritage as processual and going beyond authorised narrations created a fruitful opportunity to research the heritage of people on the move. It offered a more socially and culturally oriented lens for analysing the cultural heritage engagement of those who migrate as part of the migration and settlement processes. This Special Issue aims to contribute to this theme, giving original empirical examples regarding cases of black heritage in Rio (Håndlykken-Luz 2024) and Amadora (Desille 2024), of (mostly) European and Japanese heritage in São Paulo (Delapace 2024), as well as presenting heritage as a transnational initiative, such as in the case of Norwegian-Polish heritage in Oslo (Nikielska-Sekuła 2024), Dutch-Hindustani heritage in Suriname and the Netherlands (Sengupta 2024), heritage in anti-racist struggles in Dresden (Müller 2024), and the regional heritage of Europe and South Africa (Magazzini 2024). It looks at cultural heritage in the context of migration and through the lens of transnationalism. The contributors analyse institutional and individual heritage engagement of a range of variegated actors, including migrating people, minorities, activists, local authorities, museums, states and supranational organisations trying to problematise the role of cultural heritage engagement in creating more inclusive societies. By doing so, they critically engage with the various instances of the ‘interculturality’ of heritage.

Until recently, the heritage of migrants was of most interest to heritage scholars as part of the AHD. Empirical accounts relating to the cultural heritage of migrant have focused primarily on the institutional perspective of minority heritage inclusion by mainstream institutions, while empirical data on the actual engagement of those who migrate with (inter)cultural heritage of old and new homelands, as well as theoretical and empirical accounts on the heritage of people on the move and its links to identity, belonging and emplacement, have been fairly limited, with some notable exceptions (Pugliese 2002; Şenay 2009; Radice 2016; Colomer 2017; dos Santos 2017; Mohamed and Holtorf n.d.; Nikielska-Sekuła 2019; Somaiah 2022). In addition to the limited amount of empirical accounts of grassroots heritage performances in the context of migration, cultural heritage scholars have often failed to implement a migration studies’ perspective to migrant peoples’ heritage, thereby replicating the constraints of methodological nationalism (Byrne 2016).

Analytical rather than descriptive discussions on the heritage of those who migrate are rather limited in migration studies, where cultural heritage is mostly synonymous with ‘origin culture’. In fact, cultural heritage is not equal to culture (Macdonald 2013: 54). Culture is something we can learn from and be enculturated in. Instead, heritage focuses on ‘where you come from’ (Macdonald 2013), which is often assumed to refer to somewhat essentialised ethnic identities (Matarasso 2006: 53–54; in Bodo 2012: 181). Heritage constitutes those elements of culture that are consciously marked by individuals and groups as inherited from ancestors and crucial for the preservation of group identity for future generations, even if this preservation is a matter of constant negotiations leading to the transformation of heritage (Bodo 2012). Culture, in turn, features practices, ideas and customs, not all of which are important for identity. Traditionally

understood, cultural heritage touches upon supposedly the most essential aspects of a people's identity: 'things that matter a lot to some people and that are bound up with their sense of who they are' (Macdonald 2013: 53) and may therefore constitute a crucial factor for the emplacement of people on the move.

This Special Issue has the ambition of advancing the theoretical and empirical discussion on the cultural heritage of people on the move by employing a theoretical framework from migration studies and combining it with processual and performative approaches to cultural heritage developed in critical heritage studies. Bringing together perspectives from both the cultural heritage and migration fields of study allows the difference between cultural heritage and culture to be highlighted and opens the possibility of problematising the link between heritage practices, interculturality and actors' identities. It also enables us to break away from the national frames usually adopted in cultural heritage accounts, while exploring new venues for people with and without migration experience to live together and produce cultural heritage.

Cultural heritage and its management are closely tied to identity politics, making it highly relevant when newcomers' inclusion is at stake. The politics of recognition (Fraser 2000) often involves and uses heritage. Claims to identity, as well as claims for the right to be different within a particular community/society, often seek out historical legitimacy that is made into group heritage (Smith 2021). As Macdonald (2013) indicated, museums often lay the ground for such claims to identity. The contributors to this Special Issue discuss how cultural heritage institutions are used to manage identity politics according to the authorised inclusion/exclusion discourse. They discuss it through cases of city migration museums (Delapace 2024), regional heritage centres or programmes fostering transborder identity (Magazzini 2024), as well as national museums seeking to highlight the recognition of its 'multicultural' members (Nikielska-Sekuła 2024). Since culture, and especially cultural heritage, as an indicator of autochthonous belonging (Geschiere 2009) has gained importance as a way of talking about a racialised idea of the nation (Balibar et al. 1991; Wikan 1999), the access to and recognition of cultural heritage within nation-states determines belonging on a socio-cultural level. Nikielska-Sekuła shows in her contribution how national heritage opens a breach for the heritage of minorities. She discusses the interplay between the institutionalised and grassroots heritage of new Norwegians. She takes the example of the National Folk Museum in Oslo (Norway), highlighting what tensions this representation may bring. Similarly, Håndlykken-Luz tackles the interplay between AHD and grassroots heritage performances in one of Rio's many favelas (Brazil), discussing the role of heritage in creating and performing the politics of recognition and resistance locally. In a similar line, Desille (2024) presents how heritage is used as a means of empowerment, but also of resistance against demolition in the self-built neighbourhood of Amadora (Portugal). In a beyond-national perspective of two regions, Magazzini problematises how employing memory and transnational heritage can foster a collective history and sense of belonging across a wide region in ways that go beyond ethnicity or nationality. She does it using the example of the House of European History in Brussels and the National Liberation Movements Heritage Programme (NLMHP) in the southern African region. These actions are aimed at creating a cross-regional identity and broadening inclusiveness through making a common heritage.

Coloniality of Power in Heritage Studies and Decolonial Heritage Practices

The collection of articles within this Special Issue opens another discussion, that of the persistence of the ‘coloniality of power’ in sustaining the domination of Europe over the rest of the world. By decentring their gaze and conducting research either outside of Europe or at the margins of European centres, the authors expose the possibilities opened at the crossroads between migration studies and critical heritage studies to resist this domination.

The concept of the ‘coloniality of power’ was mainly developed by Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano (2000). Stemming from the declarations of the ‘Non-Aligned Movement’ (the 1955 Bandung conference and the 1961 Belgrade conference), and in general from critical thinkers of the then called ‘Third World’ (Mignolo 2013), the concept of the ‘coloniality of power’ and the decolonial perspective it promotes acknowledge the permanence of the colonial power beyond its historical period (Masson 2009), as well as the material and symbolic processes of reproducing social hierarchies it sustains.

The concept has been highly relevant to deconstructing existing policies and responses in migration studies (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2018), as well as in heritage studies, given that colonialism-induced displacements (Linehan et al. 2020) are present in local/global heritage. It has also enabled the deconstruction of the production of knowledge on migration and heritage. In fact, the empirical and theoretical production of knowledge within these two fields have largely emerged from the old colonial centres located in the Global North (Collins 2011; Natter 2018; Schmiz et al. 2020) to the detriment of studies regarding migration processes in the Global South (Martiniello 2013; Lacroix and Desille 2017). The inclusion of cases from Brazil, India and South Africa in this Special Issue is therefore crucial to opening a discussion on the intercultural heritage of migrants beyond Europe. Maria Eleonora Sanna and Eleni Varikas (2011) argued that the space–time dis-continuum between colonisation and the construction of the modern nation-state constitutes a great cognitive barrier, sustained by colonial narratives. In an attempt to decolonise this temporality, the article by Delapace (2024) on the museum of São Paulo, and the one by Håndlykken-Luz (2024) on the open air favela museum (s) in Rio de Janeiro move the time cursor and include slavery as one of the major population displacements (and emplacements) affecting contemporary Brazil. Both articles are very efficient in reconnecting the colonisation of the South American continent, the slave trade and the development of global capitalism with more contemporary forms of expropriation, exploitation and racism. Hence these are welcomed contributions to reaffirm the long relations and reveal the complexities of movements between the old colonial centres and colonised countries.

Moreover, Håndlykken-Luz’s work (2024) in the favelas brings to the fore the grassroots discourses and practices outside of AHD, demonstrating that Black residents not only see themselves as displaced within Brazil, but also as carrying the marks of displacements of their ancestors from the period of the transatlantic slave trade on to today. Dissident heritage in the favelas helps to counter the traditional representation of these areas’ residents as a-historical, and to produce sites of resistance for ‘carrying’ and ‘producing Blackness’ (see Nascimento in Smith 2021). Magazzini’s article (2024) on the attempt to establish a regional heritage initiative in southern Africa also participates in breaking free from imposed colonial spatial (b)orders and finds commonalities beyond ethno-national

colonial categories. Even though the NLMHP never became a physical museum, it has taken as its central theme the fact that countries in southern Africa are the very product of colonialism, and has aimed to collect, document and memorialise the mosaic of Africa's heritage accumulated during the struggles for independence. Magazzini argues that the programme portrays 'how much anti-colonial struggle "took place in and between spaces that were categorically different from the national frame"' (2024).

The inclusion of sites and institutions such as museums, heritage festivals and heritage tours in the Global North, where the colonality of power persists or is resisted, is an important contribution too. The experience of favela women resisting through heritage is paralleled to that of the Black residents of Amadora (Portugal) in a self-built neighbourhood (Desille 2024): 'Leaving a trace of the plural and singular ways in which "colonised but not only" subjects adapt, circumvent and construct spaces on the margins of (neo)colonial relations is a major tool for weakening the epistemic power of the colonial narrative' (Le Petitcorps and Desille 2020). The reterritorialisation of the San Jon Festival from Cape Verde to Portugal, or the architectural potential of collective building or 'Djunta mon' in the self-built areas described by Desille (2024) are part of this trace of resistance and repossession of historical narratives about Black heritage in Europe. As Müller (2024) demonstrates in her contribution, radical leftist politics have slowly incorporated the question of heritage, including the heritage of people who have experienced migration, and this can be seen as an attempt to counter the authoritarian heritage of the populist right.

Mobile Heritage Performances in the Context of Migration and Transnationalism

A decolonial approach is therefore productive in countering the modern nation-state as a container of social processes in time, but also in space. The articles in this issue efficiently move beyond 'methodological nationalism' (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002) by adopting a neighbourhood (Desille 2024; Håndlykken-Luz 2024), urban (Delapace 2024, Müller 2024), or regional (Magazzini 2024), as well as a nation-state's (Nikielska-Sekuła 2024) perspective. By doing so, they present the multilevel and transnational character of heritage performances, discussing the tensions between the ways in which the heritage of particular communities is displayed and interpreted along networks of actors and institutions (Nikielska-Sekuła 2024). This networked perspective on heritage operates in the context of the mobility of heritage users, recognising the multiplicity of movements (for example, the 'twice-migrant' Indo-Surinamese-Dutch diaspora, in Sen Gupta 2024) that eventually shape the heritage of people on the move.

There are a few scholars who have proposed new concepts reflecting the mobility of heritage practices. Proposals of terms such as 'corridors', 'remittance heritage' (Byrne 2016), 'migrating heritage' (Innocenti 2014), 'heritage in becoming' (Nikielska-Sekuła 2019), 'cross-cultural heritage' and 'heritage on the move' (Colomer 2017) have enabled other scholars to think of 'the ways in which [heritage] is caught up in local and global processes' (Harrison 2013: 10). These proposals are embedded in a conceptual shift, as transnationalism breaks free from the idea that people on the move can be studied either from the moment and place they leave or from the moment and place of arrival (Glick-Schiller et al. 1995; Faist 1999; Lacroix 2013). Against the idea that

people on the move are neither here nor there (or floating in space) (Nikielska-Sekula and Desille 2021), heritage practices are decisive in the emplacement of people who experienced migration in the neighbourhood and city where they live. However, these practices, and the sites of heritage they produce (Smith 2016), also make up the city. Migrant heritage can be part of what Doreen Massey (1995, Massey et al. 1999) calls the ‘external links’ critical to the transformation of a city. In other words, heritage practices, even when emplaced in the city, rely on networks of people, objects, musical heritage and so on, that exist beyond the city boundaries (Desille 2024; Müller 2024). Müller shows in her piece that it was the collaboration between various cultural associations and institutions, local artists, and community projects that gave the ‘No-Pegida’ anti-racist movement visibility. Even though No-Pegida no longer exists as a movement, ‘the informal network that developed from the protests continues to sustain collaborations’ (Müller 2024).

Delapace (2024) describes the creation of the *Hospedaria do Imigrante* – now the Museum of Immigration of São Paulo – in nineteenth-century Brazil, following the abolition of slavery when private coffee growers organised the Society for the Promotion of Immigration and brought over a poor European labour force to São Paulo with preestablished labour contracts. She writes: ‘it should be remembered that the *Hospedaria* is largely responsible for the characteristics of the Brás district, described with so much insistence by national and foreign writers’ (Delapace 2024). Similarly, Håndlykken-Luz (2024) reminds us that Rio’s favelas are largely established by descendants of slaves from other Brazilian regions such as Minas Gerais. These favelas form important parts of the city, with some next to Copacabana included in the UNESCO cultural landscape.

The deterritorialisation of heritage, and its adaptation to new locales, is not limited to the physical and material worlds. As Sengupta (2024) argues, touring networks, radio broadcasts and online streaming, music-centred applications, as well as other digital technologies, have also participated in the ‘creolisation’ of Hindustani musical heritage.

Instances of Interculturality in Cultural Heritage Engagement

Throughout the various contributions to this Special Issue, the authors have directly or indirectly discussed what is often regarded in the literature as intercultural heritage. The authors have exemplified three modes of understanding interculturality in cultural heritage production and display. These are (i) *interculturality as symbolic heritage making*; (ii) *interculturality as a dialogue in heritage making*; and (iii) *interculturality as co-production in heritage making*. Below, we present this typology calling it the instances of interculturality in heritage making and highlighting that the typology proposed is by no means exhaustive.

Interculturality as Symbolic Heritage Making

According to the existing literature, the concept of intercultural heritage is often linked to ‘intercultural dialogue’ (Bodo 2012, Lixinski 2023), which serves as a starting point for intercultural heritage production. Intercultural dialogue is oriented towards involving the heritage practices of non-mainstream communities in public heritage displays. Such intercultural dialogue is often found in museums, which see their role as the

convenors of knowledge about ‘other cultures’ to mainstream society (Bodo 2012). As Bodo indicates, however, ‘what often distinguishes these initiatives is not so much a will to encourage attendance and participation on the part of migrant communities, as to promote a ‘knowledge-oriented multiculturalism’ directed principally at an autochthonous public’ (2012: 182). In this line, Desille (2024), in her contribution to this Special Issue, uses intercultural heritage as synonymous to authorised *migrants’ heritage* practices, meant to ‘neutralise’ them so that they do not appear to be political. We adopt Desille’s definition, to discuss the implications of the prevailing authorised nature of preserving minority heritage in attempts to ‘brand’ heritage as intercultural by heritage institutions.

If it is accepted that intercultural heritage represents a version of the AHD of heritage practices of people on the move (Desille 2024), the implication coming from this orientation is approaching migrants’ heritage as static and patronising it. Such a non-processual approach involves avoiding cross-cultural interaction and separates minority heritage from that of mainstream society (Bodo 2012). Nikielska-Sekuła (2024) in her contribution to this Special Issue sheds light on this problem by discussing the display of Polish Christmas heritage in the Norwegian National Folk Museum, reinforcing the institutionalised version of ‘Polish Christmas’ while omitting common transformations of this minority heritage undertaken by the Poles living in and adapting their practices to the circumstances of Norwegian society. Omitting the ‘inconsistencies’ in heritage practices of the members of the minority population when compared to the AHD of ‘Polish Christmas’ in the museum’s display misses the core point of preserving minority heritage. The circumstances of a new homeland impose transformations of the heritage of those who relocate there, due to the varying resources to maintain heritage practices available at hand in the new localities. This, however, does not make them less valuable – the negotiations between the socialised heritage practices and the resources in new homelands lead to the creation of unique heritage performances meaningful to the members of minority groups. Patronising this heritage in a way that makes it static and essentialised, and hence resistant to such change, distances it from the community it is affiliated with. Such institutionalisation in the quest for ‘authenticity’ often bears the risk of a deficit of meaning process (Olsen 2004). When heritage is taken away from the group in order to ‘be preserved’ and without consideration of the dynamic, constantly negotiated meanings given to it by the group members it was originally attached to, the risk is that people will no longer recognise their heritage, looking at it as a reminiscent of the past, rather than as a resource for present identity negotiations.

Does this mean that cultural heritage institutions should steer clear of the heritage of minorities? On the contrary – the purpose of our criticism of authorised intercultural heritage is not to force heritage institutions to abandon their ‘intercultural endeavours’. We see them as important first steps towards the greater inclusion of minority heritage. What we are actually calling for is to develop these well-intentioned actions further by involving a critical, performative approach to the heritage of both mainstream and minority populations. We would like to see an acknowledgement that heritage practices are constantly negotiable and that the role of the heritage institutions is to grasp the outcomes of these negotiations, leading to a participatory dialogue with heritage users beyond the constraints of national, ethnic and other constructed group affiliations. While important in heritage conceptualisations, group affiliations should not induce a

reductionist view of the identities and practices of their affiliates. A step towards this ideal is a dialogical approach to interculturality in heritage production and display.

Interculturality as a Dialogue in Heritage Making

Gnecco (2015) theorised multicultural heritage referring to a post-ethno-nationalist change in the composition of contemporary national societies. While this shift – from national to ‘multicultural’ – is certainly not true for all nation-states, the ethnic diversity that goes beyond national narratives of belonging is a fact in many countries and pressures changes in viewing national heritage. Gnecco suggests that patronising heritage bodies should focus on the heritage of humanity at large as a common ground for the ethnically diverse pasts of citizens, as the concept of humanity has survived the criticism and traumatic events unanimously recognised over the past 500 years. Gnecco’s idea resembles what we call here the dialogue approach to intercultural heritage, whereby the inclusion of heritages reproduced by various groups is based on a search for common historical identities, hierarchies of values and so on, that can feed into heritage that addresses everyone concerned. This is precisely what Magazzini (2024) describes through the attempts to (re)create a transnational heritage for the purposes of a shared southern African and European identity. No country has its ‘corner’ in the House of European History and no individual people or country fought colonialism in a silo from its neighbours. In a similar line, Delapace (2024) describes the attempts of the Immigration Museum in São Paulo to create exhibitions and include art that recognises a contemporary ‘Paulista’ multicultural identity.

In some cases, interculturality as a dialogue occurs beyond the new homeland. Sengupta’s (2024) contribution shows excellently how a twice-migrant Dutch Hindustani diaspora, whose members refer to the complex set of identities, produces its heritage by staying in dialogue with the ancestral homeland – India – through Indian classical music, Hindi film music and traditional folk music. They sustain their diasporic identity and develop their belonging to India by producing heritage that refers to the common historicised past in their ancestral homeland.

Another instance of dialogical interculturality is shown by Håndlykken-Luz (2024) in her account of grassroots heritage production in Rio’s favelas. It is done through engagement with the spatial environment of the favelas, shaped by the hegemonic discourses of mainstream politics and the police and the drug traffickers’ violence. This spatial heritage production serves the purposes of resistance against the contestation of the favelas’ space by authorities and legitimising residents’ spatial belonging. The case presented by Håndlykken-Luz shows that the ‘intercultural dialogue’, which in this case regards domestic movers and descendants of the slaves, is not always done peacefully and is not always done at the invitation of mainstream society. On the contrary, the grassroots production of heritage is used to change the mainstream power dynamics. The cases set out by Håndlykken Luz and Sengupta exemplify the instances in which interculturality as a dialogue is carried out as a grassroots movement and so goes beyond the AHD (contrary to what Magazzini’s contribution posits). The heritage production that the two contributors grasp is characterised by performativity, which is crucial in the third instance of interculturality in heritage production and which we call co-producing.

Interculturality as Co-Production in Heritage Making

As Bodo (2012) indicates, interculturality is a process rather than a final product, which should be borne in mind by attempts to involve minority heritage. Netto (2008) stresses ‘the importance of providing ethnic minorities with the opportunity to preserve their cultural heritage in order to challenge social exclusion, reinforce self-esteem and to promote their integration into the country of settlement’ (Clini et al. 2021). Others have stated the crucial role of the cultural participation of migrants in inclusion (Barsky and Martiniello 2021). The well-meant actions of minority heritage preservation, oriented on serving these purposes, very often contribute primarily to the legitimisation of a multicultural attitude and openness of the majority society. To change this, the minorities should be more involved in the production of heritage, in order to grasp the polyphony of migrants’ heritage performances, the influences of the new homeland’s circumstances on them, as well as their impact on the transformations of traditional mainstream heritage. This can be done through a co-production of heritage by people of various backgrounds, claiming various heritages as their own. This is exemplified by Müller (2024) in her contribution, where she describes the mobilisation of ‘subaltern’ heritage in the social movements aimed at combating ethnic cleansing, racism and other claims of far-right movements. There, the focus of heritage producers is not oriented on the spatial or historical common grounds, but rather on the co-production of cultural products that convey a shared message regarding the future vision of society. The historicised heritage background of co-producers is not prioritised, yet there is room to involve the means of cultural production that come from this background. As Müller argues: ‘the work of the Vierteltonorchester resituated and remobilised the musical heritages of the East in the context of music education [in the West] to correct misinterpretations and misuses. Thereby the musicians made it harder for culturalising racist propaganda in culture to take hold’ (2024: page number to be completed).

This means that the co-production involves not so much the objectification of (inter)cultural heritages, but rather the involvement of various, diverse actors in the heritage (co)production. The crucial part here is giving space and visibility to the outcomes (products) of these actions. Only then can ‘intercultural heritage’ work as a facilitator of inclusion, rather than being a reification of static ethnic identities or a reformulation of present identities through the reconfiguration of the dominant narrations of the past. Doing this, however, requires the will of partners, not only on the side of minorities but also among those representing the mainstream heritage. So far, these dissident practices of heritage co-production have mostly happened in marginal spaces, outside of the main heritage institutions or online.

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