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Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage? A critical perspective on the inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Catalonia

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ABSTRACT: In this paper we aim to make a critical review of the concept of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) as defined by UNESCO, especially with respect to aspects related to research. In the first part we will deal with various theoretical issues, reviewing the notion of intangible heritage and its political implications, highlighting difficulties in how to define it. In the second part we will deal with these problems from a methodological perspective, based on some inventories made following the recommendations of the Convention. In the third part we will present a case study based on the implementation of an ICH inventory, promoted by UNESCOCAT in the Montseny Natural Park in Catalonia, North-East Spain.

1 FROM THEORETICAL CONCEPT TO METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEM

The approval by UNESCO of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003) has brought about the implementation of numerous research projects into this type of heritage, both within an academic context and with respect to its management. The conservation of intangible heritage has become a priority in international aid projects, as well as in public policies focussing on heritage and local development. All of this has led to a proliferation of new legislation and local development projects.

UNESCO interest in intangible heritage has a long history, dating back at least to the 1950s. As Hottin (2010) maintains, the genesis of UNESCO interest in intangible heritage can be located in problems deriving from applying UNESCO's own 1972 International Convention on World Heritage. From its origins, the 1972 Convention was characterized by a notion of heritage which was "eurocentric, restrictive, and exclusive" (Londres Fonseca, 2002:9) and there was a clear imbalance in that the majority of the assets included as world heritage were situated in Europe. Five Western European countries (Germany, Spain, France, Italy and Great Britain) possessed the majority of assets registered as World Heritage. This "heritage eurocentrism" is reflected in a long list of national and international legislations and affects an infinite variety of practices and interventions throughout the world.

This limited vision of heritage prompted the suggestion that more thought should be given, and programmes developed to take into account the culture of non-monumental societies. (Alivizatou, 2006). As early as 1982 the concept of "intangible heritage" was developed, and in 1989 UNESCO published a non-binding *Recommendation for the Safeguard of Folklore*, a text which stressed a more traditional view of folklore, a view which was revised in 2001 in a preliminary study of the appropriateness of regulating the protection of traditional culture in an international context. This document highlighted the role of professionals and institutions specialising in traditional and folk culture in documenting and registering traditions in danger of extinction, and this shifted attention away from the cultural elements themselves to the people who played a leading role in those elements. (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004). In 2001 UNESCO

also published its first 19 *Masterpieces of World Oral and Intangible Heritage*, thus initiating a process to protect local cultures by giving them global importance

Finally in 2003 the text of the Convention was approved. It has now been ratified by more than 130 countries. This Convention not only means the definition of a new form of heritage but also a new manner of approaching it. According to the Convention "intangible cultural heritage means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity" (UNESCO 2003; Art 2).

This definition has given rise to considerable questioning and numerous debates both in the academic sphere and within UNESCO itself. Thus, in France, many anthropologists consider that the Convention represents a serious epistemological step backwards in respect to the much more scientific use which had been given to the term in previous work on the conservation of heritage (Hottin 2010:43). For this reason, in France, as Rautenberg (2009) claims, advances in studies on intangible heritage have been more a result of the need to occupy a sector professionally than out of any theoretical conviction. The holistic vision present in the UNESCO definition has given rise to numerous interpretations so that there are very different uses of the concept, and this causes considerable confusion (Alivizatou, 2005:5).

For this reason we thought it would be of interest to discuss two key aspects. Firstly, the approval of the document is presented as the result of the danger of "globalization and social transformation, alongside the conditions they create for renewed dialogue among communities, also give rise, as does the phenomenon of intolerance, to grave threats of deterioration, disappearance and destruction of the intangible cultural heritage" (UNESCO, 2003: Preamble). However many of these terms are discussed and criticized by numerous authors from the social sciences (Appadurai, 1996, Garcia Canclini, 1999 & Tsing, 2005), who consider that the specific conditions which produce the deterioration of intangible cultural heritage are social processes which need to be studied, and cannot be presented as simple phenomena which result from globalization. Secondly, the Convention considers the need to guarantee cultural diversity and the maintenance of different cultural identities. But, as Kirschenblatt-Gimblett (2006:184) maintains, the concept of "World Heritage" places people and cultures in a relationship with international legislation, and for this reason shifts control of cultural assets from local or national contexts to an international one. This is somewhat contradictory because when certain elements are categorized as heritage, cultural elements produced and generated within a local cultural context are globalized.

To a degree, the concept of ICH seems to be an "imagined category" (Appadurai, 1996:3), as a legitimized global concept which is assimilated and reshaped in each local context in a process which reveals underlying contradictions. For this reason the participation of local communities in the definition of intangible cultural heritage in Article 2 raises questions on the issue of "emic" and "etic" perspectives. The Convention aims to base the definition of ICH within an "emic" perspective, avoiding the fact that the very idea of heritage is an international concept which is imposed on local categories and entails a process in which the different actors involved (local societies, administrators, experts, etc.) are forced to enter into a dynamic which tests local capacity to reach an agreement on definitions.

With the Convention, States are committed to "take the necessary measures to ensure the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage present in its (their) territory" (UNESCO, 2003: Article 12). Amongst those measures there is special emphasis on the need to identify and define the elements of intangible heritages present in every territory by drawing up inventories. However, by failing to specify what an inventory is and how it is to be drawn up, the Convention has caused an important methodological problem: What should be inventoried, how, and with what aim?

2 ICH INVENTORIES: IN SEARCH OF THE RIGHT WAY

The drawing up of inventories has been one of the most common actions undertaken in different countries in order to be able to comply with the Convention, as States are obliged to adopt measures to safeguard intangible heritage and there is a requirement for “the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage”(UNESCO, 2003:Art.2).

A later UNESCO document clarifies what these inventories should be like, comparing them to existing inventories of tangible cultural heritage, especially those of artistic and architectural objects. It points out that “Just as monuments and works of art are identified and collected, intangible cultural heritage can also be gathered and recorded. In fact, for a State, the first step in safeguarding it is to identify those expressions and manifestations that can be considered intangible cultural heritage and making a record, or inventory, of them. These inventories may then serve as basis for developing safeguarding measures for the manifestations and expressions of the intangible cultural heritage included, and described, in the inventory. The communities themselves must take part in identifying and defining their intangible cultural heritage: they are the ones who decide which practices are part of their cultural heritage” (UNESCO, 2009a:10).

In our view, drawing up these inventories raises two fundamental methodological problems. Firstly, these inventories are often compared to inventories of tangible heritage (in particular archaeological, artistic, and architectural inventories), being seen as a collection of cultural elements. To what point can intangible cultural elements be isolated and inventoried, since, as opposed to tangible elements, they are in a process of constant change. What are the limits of the inventory? What criteria are used to include elements in the inventory? Secondly, one must consider problems which come from their social use. What use do these inventories have and how can they be restored to the community? And this conceals a central question which we will analyse below: Are inventories the most appropriate methodology for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage?

In debates held between specialists who drew up the UNESCO Convention there were two standpoints concerning the possibilities of an Inventory of Intangible Heritage (Kurin, 2004a). On the one hand, there were those who argued for the need to draw up complete inventories of intangible heritage, in the same way as for monuments or archaeological sites. On the other hand, there were those who considered that this was an immense and interminable task, based on discredited methodologies which viewed culture as being made up of atomistic elements. They criticized the fact that these inventories would not only not stimulate cultural vitality but they would even stultify it by fossilizing cultural elements.

These problems (Alvizatou, 2006) correspond to a conception of culture seen in terms of heritage, rather than from an anthropological viewpoint. In summary, from a methodological perspective we would like to point out four types of problems relating to inventories of intangible heritage:

1) The difference between tangible and intangible heritage is not absolutely clear. All tangible elements have an intangible element, a spirit of place, which gives them meaning. In this sense we could speak of a “intangibilization” of heritage, in as far as the sites and monuments have their history and their intangible aspect which is precisely what gives meaning to their being heritage. We could also talk of a “tangibilization” of culture in as far as it is often presented as being associated with tangible elements (Savova, 2009:549-550). The UNESCO definition itself suggests that monuments and heritage sites have symbolic elements and values which do not come from their technical properties and characteristics (Alvizatou, 2006:50).

2) The identification of the concept of “folk and traditional” culture as something equivalent to a wide range of cultural practices and knowledge makes it difficult to delimit.

3) The dynamic nature of culture makes it impossible to study as fossilized in the past but rather as in a process of change.

4) Practices cannot be preserved or conserved for their own sake if they don’t have a social use or if they don’t adapt to new social realities. From this point of view there is a problem with the notion of sustainability: It is sustainable to maintain practices which have fallen into disuse?

As Kurin points out (2004b), the main difference in the treatment of tangible and intangible elements lies in the fact that in the latter the “object” is a social practice and not a register, a element which can be inventoried, a written transcription or a photograph. For this reason, inventorying these elements is no easy task and entails numerous methodological difficulties. This is a challenge which is both methodological and political. Practices to be inventoried belong to the community itself, not to the museum or a scientific institution, and for this reason, “intangible” cultural practices only make sense if practised by the community itself. Neither museums nor political or cultural institutions can resort to some type of idealized or romantic recreation of culture (Kurin, 2004b). They can research but they can’t conserve culture. Considering live cultural practices as heritage can be of strategic, even political interest but it implies a contradiction in terms unless the concept of heritage is perceived in a completely different way.

On analysing various inventories of Intangible Cultural Heritage in different countries in the world, we have been able to observe how often doubts and questions emerge which are also shared by social science. There has been a proliferation of inventories in recent years as they are one of the first acts recommended in the Convention, as well as one of the elements which appear to be most concrete and easy to apply. We have analysed a total of 21 completed inventories and another 30 which are still being drawn up. The variability in existing types of inventory is eloquent proof of a problem area in which there is no shortage of contradictions.

An inventory is by definition a classification of all those elements of a certain category. For this reason the concept is usually applied to finite, quantifiable and classifiable elements. Goody (1977) highlights how theoretical and methodological implications of the lists and tables project onto reality a series of limitations associated with the need to define clear categories which can be reflected in the form of an inventory. The type of schematic thought found in inventories foments the ordering of elements into hierarchies and favours the existence of clear limits between categories (1977:81). The polysemous nature of all heritage and particularly ICH elements is thus limited by being forced to fit into an inventory format.

Many of the inventories we analysed reveal different solutions to the complexity of defining elements of ICH and to the political implications in classification practices. There is a widespread attempt to overcome the inherent difficulties in the dangers of reification implicit in heritage definition practices by trying to respond to “live” ICH characteristics emphasized by the Convention. One of the main difficulties lies in how to resolve the paradox of drawing up an essentially static inventory of live elements, which are dynamic by nature.

One element which is common to the majority of inventories analysed is that the criteria used to define elements of ICH are not specified, neither do they define which elements are considered ICH and which not, nor do they discuss the inner contradictions contained within the concept. Rather they tend to focus on specific areas. In no case do they aspire to be exhaustive. In none of the inventories analysed did we find direct reference to criteria used by UNESCO itself in its definitions of ICH, nor was there any attempt to give those criteria more concrete form (transmission from generation to generation, identity, alive, contemporary). In the case of Scotland, for example, the ICH inventory takes the form of a WIKI, a web page whose content can be edited by different users. In this way they get over the problem of limiting the ICH inventory to a finite number of elements, and adapt the idea of the inventory to the possibilities of this format, which, by definition, can be constantly updated.

On a methodological level, and in order to avoid the danger of reifying elements and the limitations implicit in drawing up inventories, many projects seek to promote ethnographic research focused on understanding processes of cultural practices, customs, representations, expressions, knowledge and techniques; thus they reflect both the conceptual complexities and the processes of production which have created elements considered to be ICH. There has been an attempt to record cultural practices as they develop, not as finished products. Many projects are illustrative of a diachronic view of heritage which includes an analysis of their history and processes as well as the presentation of the social and cultural contexts which have given life to the elements selected. This is the case in the Mexican inventory which aspires to group all those expressions and examples of ICH which are representative of the cultural groups of the country, and is based on the idea that heritage is part of conceptual systems and thus cannot be limited by classification and taxonomy. This implicitly rejects the actual definition of inventory. Some inventories which take this view have the support of expert researchers and ethnographers who refuse to pigeon-hole cultural expressions in pre-conceived categories.

One of the most frequent problems emerges when one tries to comply with the categories of ICH defined in the UNESCO convention. These categories are so loose and so vague that drawing up inventories becomes an immense task, as it is not possible to define precise limits on classification. For this reason few ICH inventories to date have aimed to be exhaustive (with the exception of China's). On the contrary, some inventories have focused on a particular category or have defined new categories related to the studied territory, or else they have divided the inventory into very clear categories which do not always coincide with those defined in the Convention. This is the case of the Buenos Aires Atlas of Intangible Cultural Heritage, focused on festivals, celebrations and rituals. Other examples are the Nicaragua Catalogue of Traditional Pacific Dances which deals with traditional dances and the Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Cambodia which focuses on performing arts and oral elements of cultural heritage.

Thus we could highlight the flexibility of categories when used in different inventories, as well as the inadvisability of applying them to the social world as a definitive taxonomic system. The definition of categories of the convention is based on an "etic" classification, carried out in an abstract manner based on the ethnocentric notions of the people who advised on and drew up the UNESCO Convention. Applying it to "emic" contexts implies a contradiction and limits the reach and local acceptance of inventories.

The idea of live heritage highlighted in the Convention has increased the importance of inventories focusing on carriers of traditions, those people who are involved in the active practice of traditional areas of knowledge. This model makes an inventory possible in which one can specify those businesses and craftspeople who can assist in the economic development of a region. This is the case of the *Répertoire suisse du patrimoine culturel immatériel* and the *Inventaire des ressources ethnologiques du patrimoine immatériel (IREPI)* in Quebec. In these inventories one should be aware of institutional interference in craftwork practices and local production. The definition of craft knowledge and practice tends to entail standardization of these phenomena which comes about through the institutionalization, reducing subjects' flexibility and independence.

The vast majority of inventories abandon the idea of being exhaustive in order to focus on finding representative elements. This is illustrated in the Mexico inventory where explicit mention is made of the impossibility of carrying out an exhaustive inventory owing to the magnitude of the cultural world. However, this leads to other problems: How can one ascertain the representativeness of elements? This means using criteria to legitimate and hierarchize, and give greater importance to some elements considered more representative than others. One way to apply these ideas is to develop "emic" criteria of representativeness, based on an exhaustive ethnographic analysis which takes into account the political implications of any projects related to ICH and the need to maintain a critical view using analytical tools.

Other inventories such as the Asia-Pacific Database on Intangible Cultural Heritage raise the possibility of creating an inventory based on sample of ICH, without aspiring to be representative or exhaustive. However it is not possible to ignore the political dimension of any inventory. Many of the projects analysed focus on the political importance of ICH as a tool to study and manage cultural diversity in their area of interest. Projects normally include recently created examples, such as those elements from immigrant communities, with the intention of integrating their various cultural activities and giving them visibility, as a first step on the way to complete social integration (this is the case in Scotland, Mexico and Buenos Aires). ICH is thus seen as a tool for political and social action and directed towards a clear goal.

In many cases these inventories identify intangible heritage as a synonym for "traditional and folk culture", without taking into account the modern day practices of the various cultural groups. At the same time they ignore the fact that practices can not be preserved or conserved for their own sake if they don't have any social use or are not adapted to new realities. Many of the projects we analyse are not the direct result of the Convention guidelines but the continuation and exploitation of inventories, lists and databases drawn up in different countries from as early as the 1980s and which focus on the idea of identifying national "folklore". This is the case of the Nicaragua Catalogue of Traditional Pacific Dances, the Seychelles inventory of folklore, the Asia-Pacific Database on Intangible Cultural Heritage, and the Bulgarian Inventory from the Folklore Institute of the Bulgarian Academy of Science, amongst others.

To conclude, we can say that one of the features of drawing up of inventories is that of transferring and summarising a complex social reality and placing it within standard classification

models. The application of classification methods drawn up first in an international area (UNESCO) and applied by States on a national level would mean unifying and reducing different social worlds to an institutionalized format to permit subsequent action. It is for this reason that the majority of inventories in this area seek formulas and solutions to escape the limits inherent in the Convention: How can you make an inventory of the intangible? It would be like counting the grains of sand in the sea....

3 THE MONTSENY ICH INVENTORY

Towards the end of 2009 the Unesco Centre of Catalonia (UNESCOCAT, a NGO dedicated to making UNESCO known in Catalan society) set in motion a project entitled *Methodology for carrying out an inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage in biosphere reserves: the experience of Montseny* (UNESCOCAT, 2009). The main objective of this project was to establish a methodology for drawing up ICH inventories in areas declared biosphere reserves by UNESCO. In order to develop this methodology an inventory of ICH in the area of the Montseny Natural Park was proposed. This area, some seventy kilometres from Barcelona, is one of the most well-known natural parks in Catalonia and was declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 1978 due to its ecological and scenic diversity. In addition it is a park with intense human activity which has moved away from farming and towards other areas, chiefly tourism (Roigé, 2010). The UNESCOCAT project aimed to draw up a list of elements of this heritage which might lead to sustainable development of the territory as well as to draw up a inventory of ICH in Montseny (UNESCOCAT, 2009:11).

UNESCOCAT asked the Montseny Ethnological Museum, an organization which is highly active in preserving cultural heritage and in the use of heritage for social outreach, for its advice in developing the project, and on its suggestion, offered us the chance to participate in the project, as we had previously carried out various research projects in the area and worked together with the museum. The specific request was to create a methodology for drawing up an ICH inventory of Montseny. With the aim of overcoming the above-mentioned theoretical and methodological limitations of the Convention, we drew up a methodological proposal jointly with the museum which took into account the ICH inventories in other areas, such as the Inventory of Ethnological Heritage of Catalonia (IEHC) and previous experience in research on ethnology and cultural heritage in Montseny. In Catalonia the IEHC (promoted by the Catalan government, the Generalitat) is a good example of an inventory based on ethnographic research and on case studies on specific issues, which overcomes the traditional notion of inventories.

Our methodological proposal was based on two key premises (Estrada, Roigé and Mateu, 2010). The first premise was the idea that we should draw up a series of field-based research projects rather than an exhaustive inventory. In this way we aimed to get over the idea of “inventory” as a group of isolated elements and to develop the notion of interrelated themes. For this reason we decided to identify and to carry out case studies on a limited number of significant elements in the context of Montseny. The aim was to describe the elements in their context as well as the social processes within which they appeared, were created, transformed and transmitted. Nine thematic areas were identified based on the broad ICH categories found in the Convention and specific working manuals were made for each of them.

The second premise was that this type of work only made sense if it took into account its possible social use. It was not only a question of making a statement of intent over the need to involve the communities who were the principle focus of the research, but also the belief that the research should be designed with this end in mind. For this reason, involving the Ethnological Museum of Montseny turned out to be an ideal way of avoiding the research ending up simply as an academic document. In addition, from the outset, the research was designed in such a way that the material was collected for social and practical purposes. For this reason a Wiki-style website was planned which would serve to give the results of the work to society, and was conceived as a new social place for intergenerational exchange and the transmission of intangible heritage. The main idea was to transfer the research results immediately using the new technologies so that older generations could transmit cultural elements to the younger generations using new cultural platforms.

This methodology provoked a long and intense debate with those responsible for the UNESCOCAT project, who disagreed with the planned approach. The project we presented was rejected and the inventory was drawn up differently to the way we had conceived it. But despite our failed participation in this inventory we believe that our experience is of considerable interest when analysing and reflecting on the concept of intangible heritage and the problems in making inventories of intangible heritage. In our view, drawing up “inventories” raises three wide questions: What is intangible cultural heritage and how can it be recognized? What should an inventory of ICH be and how should it be drawn up? What role should be given to the Convention when drawing up specific ICH inventories?

3.1 *What is intangible cultural heritage and how can it be recognized?*

Our proposal was based on the impossibility of making a clear theoretical definition of ICH and it proposed a flexible, non-mechanical methodology which left the choice of elements to be included in the inventory to the judgement of the team doing the field-work and to the will of social actors (who, according to the Convention, are those who should decide). However the people in charge of the UNESCOCAT project insisted that we had to establish some criteria for the identification of ICH, based on characteristics included in the definition of the Convention: transmission from generation to generation, identity and being alive. Thus, by comparing those cultural elements with distinct criteria it would be possible to identify and make an inventory of those elements which were “truly” ICH and separate them from the rest. In this way these criteria would acquire a normative value by classifying certain elements as Intangible Cultural Heritage.

This approach suggests a conception of culture as an atomized reality, made up out of the sum of isolated elements, and existing apart from the social actors and the society which generates, transmits and gives meaning to it within a specific context. Seen in this way, heritage elements would exist for their own sake, would have some intrinsic value and it would be possible to identify and collect them mechanically, applying a kind of conceptual filter. This view is a step backwards with respect to the Convention and bolsters the limitations it presents: although the Convention’s definition of ICH includes an atomistic conception of culture, this is nevertheless qualified in the text itself and in later documents, and a more holistic view of ICH is promoted.

A further discrepancy over the definition of ICH emerged from the categories which are established by the Convention, and UNESCOCAT’s demands for an exhaustive list of exclusive subcategories to classify the elements of ICH in Montseny. Again they insisted on the need for these and stressed that the Convention’s categories were unquestionable while we proposed making the categories more flexible and playing down the importance of the subcategories. Their insistence clashes with the qualifications made in later UNESCO documents, in the sense that the cultural diversity of each territory can require other systems of classification, when it says that there are many examples of intangible cultural heritage and elements can be highly diverse (UNESCO; 2009b:1).

In short, the interest in categories and subcategories shows up the fact that the project was aimed at classifying and cataloguing more than in finding out and understanding the uses and meanings of ICH in specific contexts. The problems that this orientation entails and its limited scientific and social interest are well known. Leaving aside the debate on the arbitrariness of the distinction between tangible and intangible heritage, the last issue which arose from the notion of ICH dealt with its reach and its relationship with the concepts “traditional culture” and “ethnological heritage”. In UNESCOCAT’s approach ICH was implicitly understood to be the same as traditional culture and this was made more evident when dealing with aspects related to the knowledge of and practices associated with nature. This led the people in charge of the project to refuse to include in the inventory any element created or adopted recently, establishing transmission from parents to children as the basic criterion for an element’s inclusion in the inventory.

3.2 What should an ICH inventory be and how should it be drawn up?

Following the wording of the Convention the UNESCOCAT project proposed drawing up a systematic inventory in the form of a catalogue of elements, taking inventories of tangible heritage, especially catalogues of architectural and archaeological assets, as a model. Making an inventory in this way is a mechanical procedure which consists of applying previously defined criteria when determining whether to include elements in the catalogue, and to record a minimum of information on each of them in order to be able to identify them. The basic element of the inventory must be the index cards on which all the necessary information would be recorded. The cards were considered to be the core element of the methodology (UNESCOCAT 2009:13) and for this reason a large amount of the work we were asked to do was to create a model index card on which information gathered during field work would be compiled. Also related to the inventory was the requirement for a system of standard subcategories in order to be able to classify unequivocally those elements of ICH considered fundamental and which we have already enumerated.

In our methodological proposal, an inventory could not only be a list of elements with a brief description. It was necessary to include certain key aspects which are necessary to understand elements of a culture: the socioeconomic, cultural and temporal context in which the heritage element is found, is alive and has meaning, and the actors who produce, use, transform and transmit the elements of ICH and recognize it as their heritage. None of this can be obtained with a simple index card but must be collected by means of ethnographic fieldwork. There were three reasons for considering it inappropriate to draw up a catalogue in the strict sense of the term. Firstly, the creation of a list means separating the heritage elements from their context and placing them in relation to other heritage elements considered heritage, so that they lose all meaning as elements of the culture and society which has created them. This promotes an atomistic view of culture which is currently rejected by the various social and human sciences (Kurin, 2004:71), and reinforces the idea that heritage elements exist for their own sake and have meaning and interest as elements isolated from their context and from social actors. As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett points out: "This means according value to the 'carriers' and 'transmitters' of traditions, as well as to their *habitus* and *habitat*" (2004:53). Thus the task of making an inventory cannot be limited to compiling intangible assets but in recording the complete system in which they are created, transmitted and have meaning. Safeguarding ICH means one has to pay attention "not just to artefacts, but above all to persons, as well as to their entire *habitus* and *habitat*, understood as their life space and social world" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004:54). Secondly, the nature of the ICH elements makes procedures and measure taken for tangible cultural elements inappropriate for "a heritage whose most important components refer to systems of knowledge, values, and the social and cultural context in which it is created" (Bouchenaki, 2004:9). As Monsalve points out (2008:5) "the methodology for recording information in the field will depend in many cases on the groups and the institution and their interest in what, when and how to record, and what resources they have". And finally, a list aims in some way to establish which cultural elements and manifestations are heritage and which are not, giving value to some and taking it away from others, which is runs counter to safeguarding local culture. Moreover the list becomes a political instrument through which governments proclaim the richness of their heritage instead of being concerned about its bearers (Earl and Seitel, 2002; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004).

3.3 What role should be given to the Convention when drawing up specific ICH inventories?

The last big question which came up in the debates with those in charge of the UNESCOCAT's project was the role to be given to the 2003 Convention when drawing up the inventory. The regulatory nature of the Convention can be seen to establish the procedures to follow in identifying, collecting and understanding ICH. Seeing the Convention in those terms however, limits the possibilities for the scientific understanding of ICH and for that reason runs counter to the very objectives of the Convention: the safeguarding of ICH. In addition, to claim that the Convention stipulates the procedures to be followed is as absurd as wishing to establish by law what scientific procedure should be followed. However, whilst in our methodological proposal we took the Convention into account as a framework indicating the broad lines, UNESCOCAT

considered it as a set of rules which had to be followed to the letter. To a certain degree this is the problem pointed out by Hottin (2010) when he indicated the contradiction which exists between a text which is presented as a law and research practice. How can one make rules for theoretical definitions? The Convention, in our view, must be an instrument which stimulates research on intangible heritage, but it can never be a theoretical or methodological guide to the way in which research should be carried out. Putting the Convention in to practice “does not mean the creation of mechanisms from scratch, nor even a tabula rasa on which to construct a new edifice. In any project it is necessary to take into account the existing sources and practices in order to carry out projects to fill in the gaps observed” (Hottin, 2011).

4 CONCLUSIONS

The 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage has set new challenges for the analysis of heritage. To a degree it has even changed the conception of heritage by giving those who are heritage bearers a central role, giving practice - and therefore the living - pride of place as an object of study, and in creating a new type of constantly evolving heritage, capable of being modified, and of a very different nature to the tangible heritage artefact (Hottin, 2010). The problem, in our view, is wishing to apply the customary procedures of tangible heritage, such as the inventory, to its study, instead of using methodological procedures from social and cultural anthropology which already have a long tradition behind them.

The contradictions and issues present in the Convention if we have analysed in this article are projected on to different local contexts when applied. The lack of criticism and reflection on the social and political implications of the use of intangible heritage, and above all the methodology based on the inventory, entails different views of heritage. How can the inventory model, heir to the previous tangible heritage lists be of help when dealing with the social reality of intangible cultural heritage?

Unlike other research programmes in which the expected results are chosen by the researchers themselves, analysis of intangible heritage has a different dimension. On the one hand, as Grenet and Hottin (2007) point out, the analyses are the result of a political measure, of a legal recommendation to draw up an inventory. On the other hand, right from the beginning they must be considered as heritage restoration projects in as far as one is analysing cultural categories in use which can not be fossilized. Research must take a fundamentally applied perspective. New debates and methodological proposals must therefore be developed in order to be able to think and act to conserve intangible cultural heritage. There are many options. But, in all cases, one must consider the role of local communities, researchers, and the administrative and political organizations involved.

ENDNOTES

- 1 - This study was carried out as part of a project entitled: “Procesos de patrimonialización de la naturaleza y la cultura. Posicionamientos locales y articulaciones globales”, which was funded by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science and the FEDER Program (CSO2008-05065/SOCI).

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