

Cultural Mapping: a Sustainable Methodology for Intangible Cultural Heritage

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To acknowledge, trace, and place cultural assets is a powerful instrument to communities. Through cultural mapping, it is possible to create a narrative about a place's identity, collecting significant intangible cultural information that is important to communities – social practices, traditions, stories, know-how, values, etc. - and that locate people in their places, in the world.

Making the intangible visible, cultural mapping is a powerful governance mechanism, involving communities in a bottom-up process of actively determining the identity of a place and what makes a place, with its idiosyncrasies, so special.

This article provides information on this methodology, which is both a process, focusing in particular on the importance of emotional and intangible mapping and the possible benefits of using cultural mapping towards the sustainable development of places: intangible cultural heritage, held and continued by the community (UNESCO, 2013), is a cultural resource that must be mobilized for the well-being of regions and their people.

Keywords: cultural mapping, emotional and intangible cultural mapping, intangible cultural heritage, sustainable development, participatory methodology

Cultural Mapping: asserting the identity of a place

A place's identity is a narrative built upon the meanings that people give to it based on its physical, social, and historical dimensions (Eräranta et al., 2016). This meaning construction cannot be defined without the community that lives within, and "ordinary people and communities can make maps to express the stories about their lives and home places" (Lydon, 2003: 131). By collecting significant cultural information, that locate people in their places, in the world; cultural mapping – tracing and placing cultural assets – is a powerful instrument to communities, making the intangible visible, and disclosing an important part of how a place is felt. This process, by engaging communities in defining the meaning of a place, is a powerful governance mechanism that implies active participation. It is also deeply territorialized, conferring each place its spirit, determined by its resources and communities, relating heritage and tradition bearers to physical spaces.

Cultural mapping may be defined as a "process of collecting, recording, analysing and synthesizing information in order to describe the cultural resources, networks, links and patterns of usage of a given community or group" (Stewart, 2007: 8), providing "an integrated picture of the cultural character, significance, and workings of a place" (Pillai, 2013: 153). Mapping is to construct a visual narrative about a place's identity, through the communities and groups' eyes.

Today, modern cartography recognizes maps as memory holders, and the importance of integrating emotional and affective dimensions in maps (Caquard & Cartwright, 2014), as well as the need to include a cultural perspective in the process of mapping (Cosgrove, 2005). As Perkins (2009) points out, a broader set of cartographic practices are needed, linking geography to the social context, and to intangibilities, that seem rather important when it comes to a place's identity. Emotions and perceptions are "a crucial part of modern cartography" (Pánek & Benediktsson, 2017: 71).

More than a methodology that allows us to reach an end, cultural mapping is a process, involving both the collection and presentation of data. A social process anchoring identity in place occurs while mapping (Offen, 2003). Given the participatory nature of cultural mapping (Duxbury et al., 2015), this methodology and process "inherently critique the dominant, or conventional, historical geography", discusses "the larger social and political meaning of the mapping project" (Offen, 2003: 390), and is a development tool available to communities (Freitas, 2016). "Community mapping is both the recovery and discovery of the connections and common ground that all communities share", and a vital part "for participatory learning, community empowerment and sustainable planning" (Lydon, 2003: 131).

Duxbury, Garrett-Petts, & Maclennan (2015) identify five main trajectories in cultural mapping practice nowadays. The first, "community empowerment" or "counter-mapping", creates alternative maps, with alternative views that tend to seek a change of perspective. The second, "cultural policy", seeks to bring together all sectors of a given community (civil, academic, industry, government) towards the development of cultural and creative sectors. The third, cultural mapping in the context of municipal governance, concerns the cultural planning held by local governments in order to know and improve their cultural assets. Artists also make cultural mapping (fourth trajectory), inspired by issues such as urbanization, or cultural practices. Finally, the academic world, in theory and practice, approaches questions like map production, intangible and emotional mapping, recartographisation, geographical information systems, etc.

New ways of mapping (and counter-mapping) drive us to go beyond the boundaries of geography (Cattoor & Perkins, 2014), emerging new interpretations of the places, which are defined by their intangibilities. The narrative power of maps and the recognition that the identity of a place is constructed by the meanings that people give to it (Eräranta et al., 2016) make cultural mapping an essential tool for the development of

territories, whose identity is anchored in its resources and communities. It is the acknowledgement of a territory's cultural elements that confers its identity.

New epistemological and theoretical approaches arise such as Kitchin, Gleeson and Dodge "post-representational cartography" (2013), Anderson & Smith "emotional geographies" (2001), Austin "cognitive mapping" (1994), Graybill "emotional topography" (2013), or Aitken and Craine "affective geovisualization" (2006). Maps not only represent space, but also what draw us emotionally (Craine & Aitken, 2009), and our emotional responses to cartography (cognitive cartography) must be comprise (Klettner et al., 2013). From cultural mapping results maps with new shapes, with different content, focusing intangible heritage, emotional responses, stories, etc.; maps that provide alternative views of re-imagined landscape (recartographisation), new narratives and new discourses. Mapping methodologies become broader as new theoretical frames are discussed, and cartography readjusts to enfold intangible, emotional, social and cultural aspects.

Examples of cultural mapping methods include mapping tourists maps (Farías, 2011); the spatial structures of stories (Caquard & Cartwright, 2014), story-telling (Jeannotte, 2016), or writing-as-mapping (Radović, 2016); mapping-as-wayfinding (Roberts, 2014), filming while walking (cinemapping) or other wayfinding practices such as wander (Radović, 2016); screenplay, screenwriting and scenography (Eräranta et al., 2016); ethnographic studies (Cauchi-Santoro, 2016); and mapping web user's photographs (Straumann et al., 2014); some combining new methodologies with the most advanced GIS (geographic information system) techniques, geovisualization techniques and tools (Craine & Aitken, 2009), new software, and new ways of approaching data such as distortions, algorithms, and variable map-scales (Reuschel et al., 2014).

Intangible and emotional mapping is being used to collect different perceptions of the urban space

(*EmoMap Project*), to build maps that capture how people feel about a city (*Invisible City Project*), to map the affective, sensual, and ephemeral complexity of spaces, focusing on intangible "subtleties" (*Mn'M Project - Measuring the Non-Measurable*), to map the culture and the expressions of places (*Small Cities CURA*). The same exercise is being applied to literature, in the *Literary Atlas of Europe*, a project that maps and analyses the geography of fiction. In 2017, the *CREATOUR Project* mapped territorial landscapes through objects (Cabeça et al., 2018): which are the tangible things that characterize a given region or community and that make them unique and valuable? These different applications of the same resource (providing educational, social, community, academic tools) seem to coincide in one aspect: the statement of local identities through a place's significance. To understand the emotional impact of territories, and which emotions arise while participating in intangible cultural practices, can help us to draw an emotional landscape linking both communities and its heritage and territory.

Non-conventional maps, and modern cartography are re-imagining landscapes, and integrating emotional and affective dimensions in maps, reconceiving spaces, mapping stories, studying ways to represent emotions, comprising the use of social media.

Cultural Mapping and Intangible Cultural Heritage

The UNESCO'S Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003, article 2.1) defines intangible cultural heritage as "the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills (...) that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage". This intangibility does not subsist, however, without the tangibility associated with it – instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces – or without a community of practitioners. Nor does it occur in an empty space (id. Ibidem). Three dimensions are, therefore, essential in the definition of the intangible heritage: the communities, groups and individuals - creating, recreating and transmitting their practices - the tangible objects that allow their

practice; and the context in which it occurs, situated in a time and space that determines its evolution. The territory in which the intangible cultural heritage is maintained and developed, "is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history", which provides it a "sense of identity and continuity" (id. Ibidem).

Intangible Cultural Heritage is deeply linked to communities and territories, and to how each place is felt. Previous studies on cultural manifestations proved the strong relation between intangible heritage, tradition bearers and territory (Cabeça & Santos, 2016; Cabeça, 2016). A clear example of such connection can be found between Alentejo and its most well-known intangible practice: *Cante Alentejano*, UNESCO's World Intangible Cultural Heritage since 2014. In this southern region of Portugal, *Cante Alentejano* – a way of singing without instruments, different from the others in the country and abroad – can be heard. The link between this type of chanting and its geographical space is so strong that "*Cante*" is almost synonymous of "Alentejo". No other musical practice in Portugal refers geographically to a (cultural, social, political) territory so peremptorily as *Cante*: whether singers are in Alentejo, in the South Bank of River Tagus or in Toronto, they call themselves "*Alentejanos*" (from Alentejo); and being from Alentejo is almost the equivalent of being a bearer (in a broad sense) of this original chant (Cabeça & Santos, 2016). In fact, *Cante Alentejano* is often referred solely as *Cante*, once that single word already states its origins (Alentejo). When comparing the descriptions of "Alentejo" and "*Cante Alentejano*" provided by municipalities and tourism bureaus (Cabeça, 2018) the relation between the region and its cultural capital becomes even more evident: the same key elements are used to define both. Alentejo is "landscape and nature", "identity and authenticity", "gastronomy and wines", "fairs and festivities", "culture and heritage", "people", "leisure and recreation". And so is *Cante*. A sentence written on the Municipality of Castro Verde website illustrates perfectly the linkage: "*Cante clung to the white of the houses, to the abruptness of the*

landscape, to the verticality of the holm oaks and of men".

Topophilia, the emotional attachment to place (Casey, 2009), make us consider cultural mapping, particularly emotional and intangible cultural mapping, a useful tool to disclose the cultural assets of a given community or territory. In addition, heritage mobilizes mechanisms of cultural identity production (Cabeça & Santos, 2016). When involved in determining what is so special about their places, communities feel "being special by living in a special place" (Gu & Ryan, 2008: 646) (such phenomenon occurred during the *Cante's* application to UNESCO). Social and cultural benefits were, then, accomplished. Several works focus on community building through cultural mapping (Lydon, 2003; Offen, 2003; Parker, 2006; Perkins, 2007). As Grasseni (2004) points out, by evoking history and cultural practices, cultural mapping shapes local identities, creates a bond between people and places and states the "common ground that all communities share" (Lydon, 2003: 131).

A recent cultural mapping exercise, under the coordination of *Proactivetur / TASA Project*, illustrates its potential benefit to communities and to the preservation of the cultural heritage of people and territories. In São Bartolomeu de Messines (Algarve, Portugal), an artistic intervention developed in partnership with the local community, created a route dedicated to tinwork. In several places of the village that are associated with this practice (jointly defined taking into account the local daily life) are now exhibited pieces executed by new tinsmiths that, using old techniques, gave them a personal and contemporary brand. With these 11 streets itinerary, according to the promoters, the memories concerning tinwork, its practitioners and the very identity of the village, that are rooted in the community, are revived; and a traditional know-how is redeemed.

Cultural Mapping: at the communities' service and towards Sustainable Development

Regional cultural resources and community engagement are, as often stated, sources of

development and financial income. Such vision is shared by regions and local authorities throughout the world, that develop their Smart Specialization Strategies, based upon the region's strengths and through innovation, creativity, and open and participatory policy processes (Barata et al. 2017). And, in fact, "innovation processes do not occur in a vacuum or according to a standard formula, and are deeply rooted in territorial conditions. The integration between innovation dynamics and the specific cultural features of place emphasises the spatial dimension of creativity and its relation to the specific features of territorial capital (i.e. natural, physical, symbolic, human and spatial)" (id. Ibidem: 95). Plus, community involvement might strengthen the sense of belonging and lead to a greater interest by public authorities in a place's maintenance (Gu & Ryan, 2008). Heritage can be a tool for a bottom-up process of governance, a resource for local development and for community involvement.

Knowing what is so special about the places, ensuring the involvement of communities in such process, might contribute to a more sustainable development and economic and social income for communities, and regions. By linking the cultural heritage to its territory and communities, placing them; significant cultural assets, tangible and intangible, emerge to create distinctive places, strength local identity, promote the use of local resources (human, natural, cultural, social). In this exercise, cultural mapping seems rather important.

- **Defining a place's identity, and creating distinctive places**

Culture plays an important role in the construction of a landscape, a place's image (Gonçalves, 2005), and intangible cultural heritage is an important dimension of the "sense of a place", providing an identity to specific locales (Longley & Duxbury, 2016). There are techniques, know-how, traditions, that are inherently owned by specific groups and are developed in particular places. Therefore, such cultural assets cannot be disconnected neither from its formal properties, neither from its means and modes of

production, neither from the context in which they occur (Cabeça, 2016). As a result of mapping intangible assets, one can find or rediscover a regions' identity, capturing "narratives that give meaning to a particular place" (Jeannotte, 2016: 41). Also, emotions, and places are very much connected (Pánek & Benediktsson, 2017). In that sense, the mobilization of the cultural resources that are specific to each location are extremely important to create unique destinations, unique territories with unique assets, to make each place special, lived and felt. Each place has its own cultural symbols. To "establish a link in the mind of the visitor between particular manifestations of culture and creativity and specific locations" will allow places to develop its distinctiveness (Richards & Wilson, 2005: 7). Taking that into account, cultural mapping, drawing connections between people and places, is a tool, a methodology, and a process at the communities' service that can help to draw a place's image, determining what best defines it.

- **Making use of place-based resources**

To map the cultural resources, networks, links and patterns of usage of a given community or group, in a communitarian participatory process, is also a first step towards sustainability and the development of local culture. When communities possess the knowledge of their own strengths, they might be used to boost creativity and innovation. To valorise a territory's cultural and natural specificity at a community scale can lead to new alliances between different types of stakeholders, and give birth to new culture and creative industries that embody or convey cultural expressions. A territorially based view is a value proposition for the global economy that emphasises the territorial capital, which is a spatial dimension that relates a given territory to its specific characteristics. In such vision, the value proposition of cultural heritage and the sense of place are basis for territorial development.

The identification of place-based assets such as cultural heritage and cultural values can bring prosperity for local community and benefits such as cultural heritage and cultural values preservation,

local identity, pride and other social value to regions (Ohridska-Olson & Ivanov, 2010). To mobilize endogenous resources and to involve communities in that process – in which cultural mapping is a first step – has an economic and social value for local communities and institutions and regions. To mobilize cultural assets in particular, might help to combat desertification, revive arts and crafts and traditional knowledge, promote spaces and places (manufactories, stores, markets, etc.), arouse memory, promote creativity and social innovation. The use of a territory's heritage can also generate competitiveness and unique products, and make an efficient management of resources.

Cultural mapping addresses the “community based self-determination”, their sense of self (Duxbury & Campbell, 2009), build upon the meanings that people give to their practices and the way they move their cultural assets. Community self-expression can not only improve the quality of life but also, allied with creative activities, improve the ability of the places to survive over time, by relying on their inner strengths and local resources. Studies conducted on community music, for instance, demonstrate “how musical performance and expression catalyse rural cultural resourcefulness amidst uncertainty and change” (Gibson & Gordon, 2016: 1), making communities better prepared for the times to come.

- **Community engagement, and human living treasures**

A cultural practice does not subsist without practitioners, without regulators (Cabeça, 2016): the individuals and groups are the driving force of the production and reproduction of cultural goods; and apply norms, socialize the new practitioners, evaluate and sanction the practices (acceptable or not, good or bad ...). An *emic* (Pike, 1954) knowledge is, therefore, indispensable to understand how intangible cultural heritage subsists and, also, what is its ability to endure: what is considered by the tradition bearers as relevant to their behavioural system and cultural practices? Such understanding reflects the way in

which the participants of a given culture understand and organize their relationship with the world.

Therefore, mapping can't be done without involving communities: the patrimonial value of intangible heritage cannot be a mere part of the political and ideological rhetoric or an external desperate attempt to avoid the extinction of certain cultural expressions (Cabeça, 2016). Heritage bearers, as the practitioners and rulers of their cultural forms, are a key element, and must have an active role in determining what best describes their regions and the meaning of their practices (id. ibidem).

To address the cultural intangible heritage tradition bearers and broader community that frames it, the social construction of their knowledge and techniques and their specific knowledge assumes particular relevance. The evidence that both the practice and the transmission of know-how is the best vehicle for the continuity of a tradition, makes the identification of these actors and the mapping of their resources an indispensable exercise. Moreover, this assumption meets the concerns expressed by UNESCO in the document about "living human treasures" (2002), “persons who possess to a very high degree the knowledge and skills required for performing or re-creating specific elements of the intangible cultural heritage” (art. 2.1). The text recognizes the important role of these tradition bearers for "the sustainable safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage", and that one of the most “effective ways” to achieve it is “to guarantee that the bearers of that heritage continue to further develop their knowledge and skills and transmit them to younger generations” (art. 1.1 iii). It also addresses the danger of their non-recognition (id. Ibidem).

In order to safeguard and transmit heritage, besides those who possess the know-how, the community must be mobilized towards a common goal as well. Able and committed persons and entities and other local actors can contribute, sharing their ideas and feelings about their common ground, creating shared projects, and developing strategies based in the

assessment of place's opportunities, needs and resources. A first step in this participatory process is to create a common narrative about a place taking into account the community's perception of the space. Cultural mapping, in a participatory approach, creates a space for debate and, eventually, for decision-making. Results from such exercise include a common sense of place and the statement of the place's identity, the increase of the power to influence policies and to incorporate them at the level of local actors and in the region, and the strengthening of social cohesion.

- **Places and traditions' preservation, and generational transmission**

The feasibility of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding depends, then, in large part, on the aspirations and commitment of the community. When involving locals in the process of defining what best characterizes their places, an outstanding phenomenon can occur: the cultural capital, once recognized and valued by its bearers, becomes autonomous and transcendent to individual wills. Heritage becomes a symbolic object of intangible valorisation, unique, relevant and dignified, greater than the person who possess it (Bourdieu, 1999). Such phenomenon can occur when cultural practices are inscribed as "World Intangible Cultural Heritage", a recognition that, according to the practitioners, demonstrates the value of their practices. *Fado*, *Cante*, internationally recognized, are a "people's expression", owned by everyone and no one in particular, greater than any individuality. By involving community in cultural mapping, and consequently in the valorisation of cultural heritage, the tradition bearers' attachment to their culture increases. As during *Cante's* application to UNESCO: people got united towards a common project that does not make sense but in communion (a proof of the symbolic nature and power of the cultural capital, *Cante* in particular). With the internationalization and recognition of *Cante*, new groups were formed, bringing new interpreters to choir groups, especially young people, once estranged from the practice and

today organized in "youth choir groups" (Cabeça, 2016).

The ability of the intangible cultural heritage to endure relies, in last, in the practice itself: culture is the result of a construction in which one must practice to keep it alive. And to practice implies the understanding of what practitioners (single and in communion) think, and feel, about their heritage. Also, the "right ways" to execute and develop it. It's the set of discourses that the bearers convey about their practices that determines what is (or is not) part of their heritage and the practices associated with it, what can (or cannot) be done, what are the best ways to practice, and the ones not recommended, the bad or the absurd ones (Cabeça, 2016). The social actors, bearers of intangible cultural heritage, are the ones who must define what their practices consists of. The future of the intangible cultural heritage relies on the social dynamics, on the practice's development according to what has been defined as belonging (and not belonging) to a certain tradition. Relies, also, on the tangibility that is associated with heritage: instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces, as stated above.

Cultural mapping, by determining the very essence of places and their cultural heritage, by presupposing community participation for this purpose, and by identifying the indispensable resources that can be mobilized in order to ensure heritage's dissemination and transmission, is a participatory methodology to be used. The better practices are known – a result to which cultural mapping can contribute greatly – the more people are aware of the new demands, new paths, challenges. Cultural mapping, as an inventory that goes beyond the definition of a practice in itself, creates broader narratives about a place, that contextualizes the heritage in its place and relates it to its people. With such achievement, rather than the mere exercise of identifying cultural assets, cultural mapping addresses the meaning of the heritage, which raises awareness to intangible cultural heritage and to the need to preserve and transmit it, and the willingness to promote it. UNESCO's processes, promoting a greater knowledge of the place's

practices, raised awareness to the value of culture and has made communities see themselves as "worthy representatives" of unique intangible cultural heritage. The attribution of such value, which also results from the construction of a place's identity, led to a greater awareness of the need for studies and inventory, of training and capacity building, and to the general idea that some cultural traces are to be maintained in order to keep a place's and a community's identity.

Conclusion: sustainable intangible cultural heritage

Making intangible visible, cultural mapping locates people in their places, and involve communities in a bottom-up process of determining the identity of a place. Place-based, involving participatory interaction, cultural mapping is attached to places, territories and local cultural practices (techniques, know-how, traditions, etc.). It relates to the specific features of territorial capital (natural, physical, symbolic, human and spatial), to the sense of a place. Taken this into account, cultural mapping is a useful methodology towards sustainable development, once local resources and community engagement can be sources of development and financial income.

Sustainability is, then, achieved taking into account places and identities, and the use of local resources.

Intangible cultural heritage is a strong mark of the cultural identity of a territory. To acknowledge the cultural practices of a given community and territory is, therefore, a key exercise. But more than a tool to trace assets, cultural mapping can also, by assuming a participatory response, engage people in cooperative actions, maintain cohesion, preserve practices, raise the sense of belonging, lead to new strategies. Cultural mapping encourages communities to share, identify a common ground, collaborate towards welfare, engage people in learning processes. Cultural mapping creates a unique relational space, resulting in an integrated vision of heritage. To acknowledge the intangible cultural capital of a given community and the resources associated with it is an indispensable exercise in the path of sustainable development. Besides, a strong sense of place and the usage of living heritage is a benefit by itself (Gu & Ryan, 2008). The intangible cultural heritage is, itself, a sustainable heritage, providing the territories and communities an identity that makes each place special and unique. So, intangible cultural heritage contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, promoting "sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth", ensuring "sustainable consumption and production patterns", and promoting a sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems.

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