

# A QUANTITATIVE APPROACH TO UNESCO'S INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE LISTS: CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS\*

## UNESCO'nun Somut Olmayan Kültürel Miras Listelerine Niceliksel Bir Yaklaşım: Eleştiri ve Öneriler

Nurulhude BAYKAL\*\*

### ABSTRACT

The starting point of this study is the lack of quantitative and thus objective approaches to UNESCO's Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), namely the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Elements inscribed to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices are not included in this study; however, a similar approach can be applied to its analysis. While the amount of data has increased each year since the first inscriptions on the lists in 2008, no research has examined how to organize the data, and hence this study aims to fill this gap. The paper points out the problems regarding the currently available statistics and data on UNESCO's website for ICH. The main problems about the statistics relate to the disorganized classification of the countries and the inefficient use of primary concepts in describing the elements inscribed on the lists. The paper proposes one table as an example to organize the statistics related to the countries and another to depict the unhelpful conceptualizing of the elements. The paper also demonstrates how the data if organized properly and in a user friendly way can be employed to give an extensive perspective of countries' cultural heritage, their contribution to world civilization, international and domestic politics, etc. Moreover, this study employs data management techniques to evaluate how compatible the elements on the lists are with the Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH signed in 2003 based on the statistics. This paper may serve as a source for further studies focusing on elements on the lists and analyzing the data related to them by employing technological tools like data mining processes and similar applications.

### Key Words

Data management, statistics, conceptualization, classification, analysis

### ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın başlangıç noktası UNESCO'nun Somut Olmayan Kültürel Miras Listelerine, yani Acil Koruma Gerektiren Somut Olmayan Kültürel Miras Listesi ve İnsanlığın Somut Olmayan Kültürel Mirası Temsili Listesi'ne, niceliksel ve dolayısı ile objektif yaklaşımların eksikliğidir. Korumanın İyi Uygulamalarının Kaydı'na geçen öğeler bu çalışmanın kapsamına dâhil edilmedi ise de benzer bir yaklaşım ile bu listeye dâhil olan öğeler de analiz edilebilir. Listelere ilk kayıtların yapıldığı 2008 yılından beri, her sene veri miktarında artış olurken bu verilerin düzenlenmesine ilişkin herhangi bir akademik çalışma yayınlanmamıştır. Bu makale alandaki bu eksikliği doldurmak üzere yazıldı. Makalede UNESCO'nun Somut Olmayan Kültürel Miras için düzenlediği internet sayfasında güncel olarak erişilebilir bulunan istatistik ve verilerin sorunlarına dikkat çekilmektedir. İstatistiklere dair ana sorunlar, ülkelerin düzen-siz sınıflandırılması ve listelere kabul edilmiş öğeleri tarif etmek üzere belirlenen birincil kavramların etkisiz kullanımıyla ilgilidir. Bu yüzden makalede ülkelere dair istatistiksel verilerin düzenlendiği bir tablonun yanı sıra listelerdeki öğelerin nasıl kullanışsız bir biçimde kavramsallaştırıldığını gösteren bir başka tablo sunulmaktadır. Böylece makalede verilerin uygun bir biçimde ve kullanıcı dostu olarak düzenlendikleri zaman, ülkelerin kültürel mirası, dünya medeniyetine katkıları, dışişleri politikaları ve iç siyasetleri ile ilgili geniş bir bakış açısı sunmak üzere kullanılabilirliği gösterilmektedir. Buna ek olarak, bu çalışmada kullanılan veri yönetimi teknikleri ile Acil Koruma Gerektiren Somut Olmayan Kültürel Miras Listesi ve İnsanlığın Somut Olmayan Kültürel Mirası Temsili Listesi'nde bulunan öğelerin 2003 yılında imzalanan Somut Olmayan Kültürel Mirasın Korunması Sözleşmesi metnindeki maddeler ile ne ölçüde uyduğu istatistiksel veriler kullanılarak incelenecektir. Bu makale, listelerdeki unsurlara odaklanacak ve onlara ilişkin verileri veri madenciliği süreci gibi teknolojik araçlar ve benzeri uygulamalar kullanılarak inceleyecek gelecekteki çalışmalara kaynaklık edebilir.

### Anahtar Kelimeler

Veri yönetimi, istatistik, kavramlaştırma, sınıflandırma, analiz

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\*\* Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi Çeviri ve Kültürel Çalışmalar Bölümü Doktora Öğrencisi, Ankara/Türkiye, nurulhude@gmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3739-0391>

## I. Introduction

The subject of this study is the statistical data in UNESCO's Lists<sup>1</sup> of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), namely the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Since 2008, when the first inscriptions on the Lists were accepted, the number of elements has been increasing, and hence the problem of classifying and organizing the data related to them has emerged. This paper, first of all, criticizes the conceptualization of the elements included in the Lists. After that, it classifies and analyzes the data in the Lists with regard to the domains proposed in the Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH signed in 2003. However, it does not follow the five domains proposed in the Text -namely (a) oral traditions and expressions; (b) performing arts; (c) social practices, rituals, and festive events; (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; (e) traditional craftsmanship- but rather has more definite terms to classify the concepts. The newly presented "Dive into intangible cultural heritage!" page on UNESCO's official website for ICH also suggests that the five domains on their own are not sufficient to classify the elements on the Lists since the interactive visual titled "Domains of Convention" makes use of different combinations of these five domains. Rather than sticking to these domains and making the classification more complicated, this paper classifies the concepts into the following ten sections: Science, Education, Engineering & Technology; Music and Musical Instruments; Language & Literature; Farm, Agriculture

& Food; Arts & Artistic Performances; Handicrafts; Religious Culture; Community Events; Life & Culture; and Sports & Competitions. This paper argues that a systematic classification of the data may lead to progress and alteration in the application processes for the countries. With the help of useful tables and theme-based classifications, a holistic view of the ICH of humanity can be achieved. Since this study is the first of its kind, it mainly employs first-hand resources, namely the Text and the Statistics from UNESCO's official website. However, it may inspire researchers interested in data mining and thus more thorough analyses of the data may become available for anyone studying and interested in ICH.

## II. Method and Discussions

To begin with, this study mainly focuses on the classification and organization of the data related to the elements on the Lists. To ensure the study is reliable, all data are taken from UNESCO's official website for ICH.<sup>2</sup> The statistics section for the Lists and Register of Good Safeguarding Practices page has only a column chart to show the distribution of the elements on each list according to years, along with a pie chart, again depicting the distribution of total number of elements in all three lists for each year from 2008 to 2017. These statistics are in a very basic form and considered to be of no use for a serious researcher in the field. On the other hand, when one downloads the statistics file present on the website, the file includes all elements inscribed on the three lists related to the ICH Convention, their public reference number, the country/countries of application and the group they belong to, the year of inscription,

their type of candidature, if the application is national or multinational, and the title of the element, besides a short and a long description. However, the countries are not classified according to UNESCO's system (regarding the countries as: "Asian and Pacific", "Arab", "Western European", "Eastern European", "Latin American and Caribbean", and "Sub-Saharan African") or whether they are regarded as a developed country or not. Since the Text proposes "taking into account the special needs of developing countries" such a classification is necessary to see clearly if there is any distinction between countries of different development status, or, let us say, if there is a large gap between African countries and European countries, etc. This is why a table of the countries classified according to UNESCO's system is prepared in the present study (Table-1). For each country, the number of elements it has inscribed on the Lists is given for each year from 2008 to 2017. The table also shows whether the country has the element inscribed on its own or in collaboration with another country or countries. Hence it suggests whether a country has a "shared" culture. If the element involves collaboration with a country or countries from another set, the number is underlined. Moreover, in Table-1, the developed countries are highlighted. Since there are many different approaches to describe and classify developed countries, member countries of the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD are regarded as "developed" within the scope of this study.<sup>3</sup>

Another defect concerning the data downloaded from the "Statistics" section of UNESCO's website is that

although a short and a long description for each element is included, the concepts apparent on the individual webpages of each element are not included in the Excel document. The lack of these concepts in the file makes it harder to look for similar elements, otherwise categorized with the same concept(s) on the webpage.<sup>4</sup> The existence of these concepts is supposed to help the researcher looking for similar elements related to a certain subject. Thus the search button on UNESCO's webpage has the feature to look for certain key words as primary concepts. Likewise, their presence in the Excel file would make the statistical data downloaded via UNESCO's webpage more beneficial. That is why the other table prepared for this study (Table-2) includes the list of primary concepts classified according to certain subjects and organized by year from 2008 to 2017. Employing this table, researchers can produce charts and diagrams according to their field and subject of study. In addition, such a table may be useful when countries prepare their inventory lists for their applications.

Table-2 includes only the names of primary concepts and it excludes the secondary concepts related to the elements on the Lists. Although it may seem like a deficiency on the part of this study, a glimpse at the table will make the reason behind it clear. There is no standard approach in UNESCO's conceptualization of the elements on the Lists. Even the naming process of the elements does not have a standard. Some elements' names are only the traditional names in their original language [i.e. Akiu no Taue Odori (Japan), Cheoyongmu (Republic of Korea), Hua'er (China), Doina (Romania),

Katta Ashula (Uzbekistan), Hautem Jaarmarkt (Belgium) etc.], some have both the original name and the English description [i.e. Daemokjong, a traditional wooden architecture (Republic of Korea), Al-Bar'ah, music and dance of Oman Dhofari valleys (Oman), Huacnada, ritual dance of Mito (Peru), etc.], some have the adjective "traditional" as if all other elements on the Lists are not traditional [i.e. Traditional skills of carpet weaving in Fars (Iran), Traditional Sohbet Meetings (Turkey), Traditional Ainu dance (Japan), etc.], and some have the name of the country as if the name of the country is kept undisclosed [i.e. Traditional art of Azerbaijani carpet weaving in the Republic of Azerbaijan (Azerbaijan)], while some others have only English names [i.e. Scissors Dance (Peru), Human Towers (Spain), etc.]. Further discussion on the lack of a standard in the naming process may be the subject of another study; yet returning to the problem with the primary concepts, lack of standardization leads to certain problems as explained below.

First of all, using different primary concepts in similar elements makes them appear very distant from one another. The search box on UNESCO's website offers an expedient option of searching "only primary objects"; however, the researcher cannot really take advantage of it because of the lack of standardization in choosing the primary concepts describing the elements. For example, the two elements from Turkey, Mevlevi Sema Ceremony (2008) and Semah, Alevi-Bektaşî ritual (2010), have a very similar concept. Both of them have a religious context and include kinds of ritualistic dance; furthermore, in their description in the

Statistics file downloaded from UNESCO's website, the musical performances during the rituals are emphasized. However, the primary concepts to describe the former are "ritual dance", "Sufism", and "traditional dance", whereas for the latter they are "rites" and "ritual dance". The latter lacks the stress on "traditional" and also a descriptive word for what "Alevi-Bektaşî" refers to. However, the former explains what "Mevlevi" refers to as "Sufism" in the primary concepts. Rather than having two very similar primary concepts like "rites" and "ritual dance" for Semah, more descriptive ones could have been used. In addition, for both of these elements a concept related to music, such as "religious music", "traditional music", or "ritual music", could have been employed. Indeed an appropriate primary concept for both of these elements could have been "religious practices" but this was not preferred.<sup>5</sup>

One of the main problems is actually mentioned above: the existence of many similar so-called primary concepts when utilization of more inclusive ones may be more appropriate. For example, there are many kinds of rites listed in the primary concepts: agricultural rites, fertility rites, initiation rites, prosperity rites, protection rites, rites of passage, and water rites, along with "rites", ritual dances, and ritual items. The wealth of such similar and related concepts raises the question of what primary is. Indeed, the main problem is related to ambiguity in application of the word "primary" where it does not have a distinct or a literal use. A similar problem to that of "rites" is apparent in the "Religious culture" section of Table-2. It includes certain concepts related to

religious culture, such as Buddhism (17)6, Confucianism (4), Eastern Orthodox Church (8), Hinduism (9), Shamanism (16), and Sufism (5). Despite having more or less the same number of occurrences as those concepts, Islam (10) is not even once included among the primary concepts. Further discussion on this issue may be the subject of another paper; what matters for the present paper is that this situation underlines the fact that there is no proper standardization in utilization of the primary concepts.

Another example is in the “Music and Musical Instruments” section of Table-2, where the distribution of concepts deserves special attention: bowed string instruments (32), musical instruments (29), percussion instruments (125), plucked string instruments (47), wind instruments (39), and woodwind instruments (60). Interestingly, the concept of “musical instruments”, despite being the most inclusive among them all, has the fewest number of repetitions in the Lists. It is the primary concept employed most though. It has been a primary concept 8 times, whereas this number for bowed string instruments is 2, for percussion instruments is 7, for plucked string instruments is 2, for wind instruments is 4, and for woodwind instruments is 2. The lack of proper standards in naming primary concepts leaves us with somehow meaningless data like those mentioned so far. In the last example, the “musical instrument” title should be used as a primary concept for each occurrence of other concepts related to musical instruments, while those should be included as secondary concepts. With such an approach, the functionality of the primary concepts can be improved. Using broad-

er concepts for primary concepts and more definite ones for secondary ones will make the data of the statistics more suitable and efficient for use in further studies and the newly presented “Dive into intangible cultural heritage!” page on UNESCO’s official website.

### III. Tables Prepared

The tables prepared for this paper include data taken from UNESCO’s official website. They organize the information that the “Statistics” option offered on the website misses, and thus suggest solutions for the above-mentioned problems or in the case of Table-2 make them more visible.

Table-1 shows how many elements the countries have inscribed each year. As stated earlier, the countries are grouped according to UNESCO’s system (“Asian and Pacific”, “Arab”, “Western European”, “Eastern European”, “Latin American and Caribbean”, and “Sub-Saharan African”). Each set is arranged in alphabetical order. Moreover, it is easy to understand if the inscribed element is a multinational one, thanks to the “single” and “multinational” titles. If the collaboration is with a country from a different set, the number is underlined, since it is a noteworthy situation. Developed countries are highlighted to draw attention to their contribution to the Lists. In addition, for each set of countries, the top three countries’ sections are shown in bold. When the number of inscribed elements is the same for two countries, they are regarded as one and both of their sections are shown in bold. Hence, in sets “Arab”, “Latin American and Caribbean”, and “Sub-Saharan African” there are more than three countries’ sections in bold.

Sets	Country	Number of Elements Inscribed Each Year															Sum						
		2008		2009		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		Sum	Sum Total
		Single	Multinational	Single	Multinational	Single	Multinational	Single	Multinational	Single	Multinational	Single	Multinational	Single	Multinational	Single	Multinational	Single	Multinational				
Asian and Pacific	Afghanistan																	1			0	1	1
	Bangladesh	1									1							1	1		4	0	4
	Bhutan	1																			1	0	1
	Cambodia	2														1	1				3	1	4
	<b>China</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>					<b>1</b>							<b>1</b>			<b>37</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>38</b>
	Democratic People's Republic of Korea												1		1						2	0	2
	India	3	1		3				1		1							1	1	1	12	1	13
	Indonesia	2	1		1	1		1							1					1	8	0	8
	Iran			1	5	2		1										2	1	1	10	3	13
	<b>Japan</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>	
	Kazakhstan												1	1		1	1	3	1		3	5	8
	Kyrgyzstan	1							1		1				1			2	1		4	4	8
	Lao People's Democratic Republic																			1	1	0	1
	Malaysia	1																			1	0	1
	Mongolia	1	1	3		2	1				2		1		1			1	1		12	2	14
	Pakistan																	2			0	2	2
	Philippines	2															1				2	1	3
	<b>Republic of Korea</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>	
	Tonga	1																			1	0	1
	Turkmenistan														1			1	1		2	1	3
Vanuatu	1																			1	0	1	
Viet Nam	2		2		1				1		1				1	1			2	11	1	12	
<b>TOTAL by years</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>178</b>
Arab	<b>Algeria</b>	<b>1</b>							<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>							<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	
	Egypt	1															1			2	0	2	
	Iraq	1															1	1		2	1	3	
	Jordan	1																			1	0	1
	Lebanon												1								1	0	1
	Mauritania						1														1	0	1
	<b>Morocco</b>	<b>2</b>							<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>					<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	
	<b>Oman</b>				<b>1</b>				<b>1</b>				<b>1</b>		<b>3</b>					<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	
	Palestine	1																			1	0	1
	Qatar															1		1			0	2	2
	Saudi Arabia														1	1	1	1	1		3	2	5
	Syrian Arab Republic																	1			0	1	1
	<b>United Arab Emirates</b>						<b>1</b>			<b>1</b>			<b>1</b>		<b>3</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	
	Yemen	1																			1	0	1
<b>TOTAL by years</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>45</b>



Latin American and Caribbean	Argentina			1															1	1	2			
	Belize		1																	0	1	1		
	Bolivia	2						1			1					1				5	0	5		
	Brazil	2				1	1	1	1											6	0	6		
	Chile									1										1	0	1		
	Colombia	2	2	1	1	1						1	1							1	8	2	10	
	Costa Rica	1																		1	0	1		
	Cuba	1												1		1				3	0	3		
	Dominican Republic	2													1						3	0	3	
	Ecuador	1					1							1							1	2	3	
	Guatemala	1	1							1											2	1	3	
	Honduras		1																		0	1	1	
	Jamaica	1																			1	0	1	
	Mexico	1	2	3	1											1					8	0	8	
	Nicaragua	1	1																		1	1	2	
	Panama																		1		1	0	1	
Peru	1	1		2	2				1	1	1							1		9	1	10		
Uruguay			1	1																1	1	2		
Venezuela								1		1	1	1	1	1						1	5	1	6	
	<b>TOTAL by years</b>	15	6	5	2	6	0	5	0	5	0	4	0	5	0	4	2	4	0	4	4	2	57	
Sub-Saharan African	Benin		1																		0	1	1	
	Botswana							1													1	2	0	2
	Burkina Faso								1													0	1	1
	Burundi											1										1	0	1
	Central African Republic	1																				1	0	1
	Cote d'Ivoire	1							1										1		2	1	3	
	Ethiopia									1					1	1					3	0	3	
	Gambia		1																		0	1	1	
	Guinea	1																			1	0	1	
	Kenya			1								1										2	0	2
	Madagascar	1																				1	0	1
	Malawi	1	1									1									1	3	1	4
	Mali	1		3			1		1		1	1										6	2	8
	Mauritius											1				1			1			3	0	3
	Mozambique	1	1																			1	1	2
	Namibia															1						1	0	1
	Niger											1	1									1	1	2
	Nigeria	1	1	1															1			3	1	4
	Senegal		1								1											1	1	2
	Togo		1																			0	1	1
Uganda	1							1		1		1		1		1					6	0	6	
Zambia	1	1																			1	1	2	
Zimbabwe	1																				1	0	1	
	<b>TOTAL by years</b>	81	11	23	8	83	5	2	0	48	0	0	0	28	1	0	0	28	2	4	3	26	3	
	<b>ALL TOTAL</b>	81	11	23	8	83	5	2	0	48	0	0	0	28	1	0	0	28	2	4	3	26	3	
		12	2	35	7	4	0	21	3	19	0	32	4	37	0	36	4	10	0	418	40	113	13	
		531	53																					



On the other hand, Table-2 has the primary concepts describing the elements on the Lists classified and organized according to 10 sections. In each section, the concepts are arranged in alphabetical order. The numbers under the title “TOTAL” refer to the number of occurrences of the concepts in the Lists, whereas “SUM” indicates how many times they are regarded as “primary” concepts. This distinction is given in case researchers wish to compare the rates of concepts’ use in the Lists. For each section, the top three concepts are shown in bold. When the number of their occurrences as primary concepts is the same, the concepts are regarded as one. That is why the number of bold elements in the “Language & Literature” section is 4. Furthermore, in the sections “Life & Culture” and “Sports & Competitions” the numbers of occurrences for the concepts are very low and close to one another. That is why only the top 2 elements are shown in bold for these two sections.

LIST OF PRIMARY CONCEPTS ACCORDING TO YEARS														
	TOTAL	Name of the Concept	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	SUM	
Science, Education, Engineering & Technology	4	architecture		1	1				1				3	
	2	bridges		1				1					2	
	17	calendars								1			1	
	1	dwelling							1				1	
	1	education				1							1	
	1	educational games										1	1	
	17	float									1		1	
	3	health			1	1								2
	4	housing construction	1						1					2
	1	housing design		1										1
	44	instrument making					3					2		5
	4	interior architecture										1		1
	4	know-how transfer			1									1
	4	mathematics							1					1
	5	medical plants	1											1
	1	mental development						1						1
	22	new year										2		2
	10	philosophy										1		1
	2	printing methods		1	1									2
	6	ship building			1								1	2
	7	ships		1										1
	13	traditional architecture		2					1					3
	15	<b>traditional healing knowledge</b>	3		1	2	1			2				9
	67	<b>traditional knowledge</b>	2		1	2			3			2		10
24	traditional knowledge transfer	2											2	
36	traditional medicine			1									1	
48	<b>traditional technology</b>		5	4		3	2	3		1	2		20	
	<b>TOTAL by years</b>		9	12	12	6	7	9	8	0	8	7	78	
Music & Musical Instruments	32	bowed string instruments					1					1	2	
	25	choir singing	1	1									2	
	2	music					1						1	
	29	musical instruments	4	1	1	1			1				8	
	7	musical performances				1		2					3	
	5	opera	1	2	1								4	
	31	orchestras	1	1		1							3	
	125	percussion instruments	2	1					2	1		1	7	
	47	plucked string instruments					1				1		2	
	25	<b>polyphonic singing</b>	7	4	2		1		1	1	1	1	18	
	9	throat singing		1	2								3	
	191	<b>traditional music</b>	21	13	9	2	4	3	7	3	5	11	78	
	200	<b>vocal music</b>	25	24	15	5	6	4	9	6	5	7	106	
	39	wind instruments	1							1		2	4	
60	woodwind instruments		1								1	2		
	<b>TOTAL by years</b>		63	49	30	10	14	9	20	12	12	24	243	

Language & Literature	1	alphabets									1		1
	2	communication skills		1									1
	<b>38</b>	<b>epic poetry</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>
	25	folk literature			1								1
	31	humor (literary)							2				2
	68	idiophones				1				2			3
	22	legends			1								1
	2	non-verbal communication	1									1	2
	3	oral expression										1	1
	<b>125</b>	<b>oral tradition</b>	<b>11</b>			4	2		3	5			<b>25</b>
	<b>62</b>	<b>poetry</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>		1	2		2	1			<b>9</b>
	24	satire	1										1
	<b>40</b>	<b>storytelling</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>		2		1					<b>9</b>
	2	whistled language		1								1	2
29	work songs							1				1	
1	writing systems						1					1	
	<b>TOTAL by years</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>76</b>	
Farm, Agriculture & Food	7	agriculture				1							1
	9	alcoholic beverages								1			1
	21	animal husbandry							2		1		3
	20	beverages						2	1	2			5
	3	birds									1		1
	4	bread									1		1
	9	brewing									1		1
	<b>16</b>	<b>cereals</b>			2	2		2	1			1	<b>8</b>
	2	coffee						1		1			2
	6	cotton						1					1
	10	fibres								1			1
	5	fish		1				1					2
	5	fishing		1							1		2
	13	flowers				1							1
	39	food customs										1	1
	<b>44</b>	<b>food preparation</b>			2	1		5	3	2	3	3	<b>19</b>
	3	food processing										1	1
	4	forests		1									1
	8	fruit					1			1			2
	32	horse						1		1	1		3
	1	horticulture					1						1
	1	irrigation		1									1
	2	livestock			1								1
	10	meat				1						1	2
	18	plant products					1		1				2
	6	plants					1						1
	20	rice									2	1	3
	14	sea fishing						1			1		2
	3	shellfish						1					1
	15	spring									1	2	3
	<b>10</b>	<b>traditional agriculture</b>			1				3	1	1		<b>6</b>
	3	vegetable oils							1				1
12	vegetables			1			2		1	1		5	
3	wine making						1	1		1		3	
	<b>TOTAL by years</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>89</b>	

Arts & Artistic Performances	21	acrobatics				1														1	
	1	ballet	1																		1
	4	body painting	1																		1
	8	calligraphy		1					1				1								3
	61	choreography										1									1
	6	circular dance					1														1
	4	drawing	1																		1
	2	firewalking		1																	1
	23	folk art							1												1
	2	handwriting		1																	1
	15	historical reenactment			1		1														2
	56	improvisation					1						1								2
	1	mystery play	1																		1
	25	painting		1					1	1	1				1						5
	52	<b>performing arts</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>									<b>16</b>
	6	popular theatre											1								1
	4	shadow play	2	1		1															4
	3	theatre	1																		1
	11	theatrical performances	2	3		1															6
	191	<b>traditional dance</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>									<b>75</b>
34	<b>traditional theatre</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>						<b>1</b>								<b>29</b>	
	<b>TOTAL by years</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>									<b>154</b>	
Handicrafts	3	art metalwork	1																	1	
	1	bag					1													1	
	2	brocade		1																1	
	8	carpentry		1																1	
	9	carpets			3	1	1		1		1	1								8	
	1	celadon		1																1	
	8	ceramic art					1					1	1							3	
	11	clothing	2	1																3	
	3	copper									1									1	
	198	costumes	1				1												1	3	
	91	craft workers									1								2	3	
	34	<b>decorative arts</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>										<b>10</b>
	13	effigies	1																		1
	14	embroidery		1			1		1												3
	9	engraving		2	1																3
	28	fire									1	1									2
	16	furniture																	1		1
	97	handicrafts			1		1				1										3
	24	hats					1												1		2
	1	knot					1														1
	3	lace		2	1																3
	1	marble									1										1
	51	masks	3	1			1		1	1		1									8
	8	metalworking								1	2										3
	10	paper		2						2											4
	7	pottery		1			1	1					1								4
	15	puppets	4	1						1		1									7
	15	sculpture	1	1	1							1									4
	12	silk		1	1																2
	4	stick											1								1
	2	tapestry		1																	1
	39	<b>textile arts</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>												<b>13</b>
	3	toys		1																	1
	37	<b>weaving</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>									<b>21</b>
	26	wood carving	1	1															1		3
	23	woodworking	3	2	1																6
		<b>TOTAL by years</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>									<b>134</b>

Religious Culture	17	Buddhism		1			1						2
	4	Confucianism	1										1
	10	divination	1				1						2
	8	Eastern Orthodox Church	1										1
	9	Hinduism		1									1
	14	<b>pilgrimage</b>				1	1	2		1		1	6
	12	religious art	1	1									2
	7	religious music	1										1
	118	<b>religious practices</b>	3	6	2	2	5	7	2	1	2	3	33
	13	sacred sites		2							2		4
	2	sacred texts	1										1
	20	saints		1	1		2						4
	16	Shamanism				1							1
	5	Sufism	1					1					2
	25	<b>symbolic objects (symbols)</b>	3	1	1								5
<b>TOTAL by years</b>			13	13	4	4	9	11	2	2	2	6	66
Community Events	1	agricultural markets			1								1
	20	agricultural rites		2			1		2				5
	1	beauty pageant					1						1
	17	carnival	3	3	1		1			2	1		11
	21	cultural space	11	3					1	1			16
	1	door-to-door rounds			1								1
	16	fair	1		1								2
	19	fertility rite		1									1
	150	<b>festivals</b>	1	6	7	2	8	3	1	4	8	1	41
	24	initiation rites	3						1				4
	20	parades	2	4	2	1	2	1			1		13
	64	<b>procession</b>	2	5	1		1	5	1		2	1	18
	38	prosperity rite		1							3	3	7
	1	protection rite		1									1
	83	<b>rites</b>	5	10	5	4	3	5	3	2			37
	2	rites of passage		1		1				2			4
	17	ritual dance	4	6	3	1	1						15
	14	ritual items	1										1
	14	seasonal rites		8								2	10
	3	social interaction								1			1
	28	veneration of the dead	1				1						2
	1	water rite		1									1
87	wedding					1				1		2	
<b>TOTAL by years</b>			34	52	22	9	19	15	7	12	17	8	195

Life & Culture	1	age groups				1							1
	4	children	1										1
	2	Chinese art	1										1
	14	collective memory	1						1				2
	1	community action								1			1
	15	conflict resolution			1								1
	3	cooperatives								1			1
	32	cultural identity					1						1
	2	cultural minorities	1										1
	2	culture of peace							1				1
	5	customary law			1							1	2
	4	democracy								1			1
	113	family							1				1
	2	governance									1		1
	1	human rights	1										1
	5	language minorities	1										1
	10	minority groups	2										2
	3	mothers									1		1
	30	<b>nomads</b>	2					1					3
	31	pastoralism	2										2
	2	peaceful coexistence								1			1
	1	personal name						1					1
	12	precolombian traditions	1										1
	2	religious minorities	1										1
	4	rural patrimony	2										2
	5	secret society					1						1
	18	social integration					1						1
	1	social practice				1							1
12	traditional cultures	1										1	
10	<b>urban cultures</b>	2					1			1		5	
4	water resources management	1									1	2	
31	women						1				1	2	
16	women workers									1		1	
	<b>TOTAL by years</b>	14	6	3	3	3	2	2	3	6	4	46	
Sports & Competitions	8	competition			1	1			1			3	
	4	equestrian games						1			2	3	
	2	horse riding				1				1		2	
	8	hunting								1		1	
	9	martial arts			1	1			1			3	
	21	<b>sports competitions</b>			3	1		1			3	1	9
	11	<b>traditional games</b>							1	1	2	2	6
6	wrestling				1					1		2	
	<b>TOTAL by years</b>	0	0	6	4	0	2	3	2	7	5	29	
<b>Total number of concepts</b>		218	204	119	65	85	77	89	74	87	92	1110	

#### IV. Further Discussion

In this part of the essay, the data in the tables will be compared to the Text to see how compatible the results of UNESCO's initiation are with what was proposed in 2003. Hence, to show the main argument of the paper, after being classified in a certain way, the data can be employed to have an extensive perspective of countries' cultural heritage, their contribution to world civilization, international politics, etc. In this discussion part, the order to be followed is mainly dependent on the Text. The subjects will be evaluated in turn according to the order of their occurrences in the Text. The comments are based solely on the statistical data taken from UNESCO's official website; countries' application processes and their results are disregarded.

To begin with, especially the elements in the "Handicrafts" and "Farm, Agriculture & Food" sections of Table-2 give the impression that "the deep-seated interdependence between the intangible cultural heritage and the tangible cultural and natural heritage" proposed to be considered for safeguarding the ICH in the Text is realized.<sup>7</sup> Along with the top three elements in each of these sections: weaving, textile arts, decorative arts, food preparation, cereals, and traditional agriculture, concepts like carpets, costumes, masks, pottery, puppets, beverages, and vegetables altogether depict the strong connection between the tangible and intangible cultural heritage elements. Indeed, the "Music & Musical Instruments" section depicts this connection as well. The numbers of "TOTAL" occurrences of the concepts in this section indicate the interdependence in a more apparent way. Hence

one concludes that this criterion is taken into consideration in inscription of the elements on the Lists. The data at hand support the proposal in the Text.

However, there are more cases in which the data do not support the Text. For example, again in the introductory part of the Text, it is stated that "the invaluable role of the intangible cultural heritage as a factor in bringing human beings closer together and ensuring exchange and understanding among them" would be considered for safeguarding the ICH. In addition, a specific article (Article 19) is devoted to Cooperation:

1. For the purposes of this Convention, international cooperation includes, inter alia, the exchange of information and experience, joint initiatives, and the establishment of a mechanism of assistance to States Parties in their efforts to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage.

2. Without prejudice to the provisions of their national legislation and customary law and practices, the States Parties recognize that the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage is of general interest to humanity, and to that end undertake to cooperate at the bilateral, subregional, regional and international levels.

In this quoted article, international initiatives and collaborations are explained. However, the apparent results in the Lists are not satisfactory. In total, there are only 33 elements inscribed with multinational collaborations. The number of collaborating countries decreases as the number of elements increases. There are 18 elements with the collaboration of 2 countries, 6 elements with 3 countries, 5 elements with 4 countries, and only 1

element for consequently 5, 7, 12, and 18 countries. The elements involving many collaborators are Falconry (18), Nawrouz (12), Mediterranean Diet (7), and Flatbread making and sharing culture: Lavash, Katyrma, Jupka, Yufka (5). Moreover, although in the first year of elements' inscription there were 9 collaborative elements, in 2009 there was only 1, while in 2010 and 2011 there were none. The number of collaborating countries remains always less than the number of countries having their proposed elements inscribed on their own; 2016 is an exception because Falconry, Nawrouz, and Flatbread making and sharing culture were all inscribed then.

In this context, Flatbread making and sharing culture: Lavash, Katyrma, Jupka, Yufka deserves a special focus. In 2014, Armenia had "Lavash, the preparation, meaning and appearance of traditional bread as an expression of culture in Armenia" inscribed on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Two years later its neighboring countries had a very similar element: "Flatbread making and sharing culture: Lavash, Katyrma, Jupka, Yufka" inscribed on the same list. While the bread making technique is very much similar and while the countries share a similar context of sharing the bread during weddings, their existence as two separate elements on the same list suggests a failure on the ICH's side in bringing human beings closer together and ensuring exchange and understanding among them.<sup>8</sup> Statistically speaking, the countries having "Flatbread making and sharing culture: Lavash, Katyrma, Jupka, Yufka" inscribed, namely Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan,

Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey, have other collaborated elements in the Lists as well. Azerbaijan's 3 out of 11 inscriptions are multinational, whereas this rate is 3/13 for Iran, 5/8 for Kazakhstan, 4/8 for Kyrgyzstan, and 3/13 for Turkey. On the other hand, Armenia does not have any multinational elements inscribed to the.

In addition to the elements with many collaborators, the elements with fewer collaborators deserve special attention as well. Some of these elements seem to work against the reason for their existence, as in the lavash example. Collaborated elements should show the significance of a shared culture and the results of years of coexistence. However, in certain cases they portray the well-bordered distinctions among countries. As Martha Anico and Elsa Peralta state: "in order to identify with some, people need to disidentify with someone else" (2009:1). For example, all three collaborated elements of Azerbaijan are with Iran. In addition, Turkic countries such as Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and Arab countries like the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia are almost always together in terms of their collaborated elements. A similar distinction is seen among the developed and developing European countries. The developed European countries always come together with other developed European countries, while the developing European countries are together with other developing European countries. The same rule is not applicable to Asia's developed countries, since the Republic of Korea has collaborated elements with Cambodia, the Philippines, Viet Nam, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kazakhstan,

Mongolia, Pakistan, Qatar, and Syria.<sup>9</sup> Naturally, the shared history and culture lead to such distinctions, yet the results of a statistical comparison of European developed countries with their Asian counterpart are especially noteworthy. As it was stated earlier, in certain cases, the collaborated elements contribute to segregationist approaches rather than bringing cultures together.

Again, the statistics show that ICH belonging to minorities has little significance for countries in general.<sup>10</sup> This is indicated by the number of concepts related to minorities in the “Life & Culture” section of Table-2: cultural identity (1), cultural minorities (1), language minorities (1), minority groups (2), peaceful coexistence (1), religious minorities (2), and social integration (1). Although the total numbers of occurrences for these concepts are higher, even the sum of these numbers does not come close to those of other popular concepts, such as “rites” or “festivals”. Thus, this situation can be regarded as a defect on the part of UNESCO since the importance of “cultural diversity” is highlighted several times in the Text. In the coming years, countries should be encouraged to propose elements on “cultural diversity”, “peaceful coexistence”, “social integration”, and minorities in general.

#### IV. Conclusion

When preparing Table-1 and Table-2 for this paper, a researcher’s point of view is taken into consideration, yet the tables are still designed from an individual researcher’s point of view and they may lack certain qualities for those focusing on unexpected subjects. However, the importance of this study is its suggestions that classifying data

is crucial and when done properly in a certain way it may lead to broader perspectives related to, but not limited to, countries’ ICH, their shared history, international policies, internal politics related to minorities, etc. A quantitative approach to the Lists of ICH employing statistical data may provide a holistic view of the relations among the elements as it is shown throughout this paper.

With the current Statistics presented on UNESCO’s website, it is very difficult to form useful insights. Hence, the tables proposed in this paper may help and/or inspire further studies. Publication of this study limited the scope of the tables since they are meant to fit within a paper. However, on UNESCO’s website or on another digital platform, the data can be organized in such a way to depict the connections between the countries, concepts and the elements more vividly.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, use of technological tools like data mining processes and similar applications may lead to more detailed, inclusive, explicative, and analytical results and interpretations in further studies.

#### NOTES

- 1 From this point onwards, the capitalized word “Lists” will refer to these two lists published on UNESCO’s website. In addition, the capitalized word “Text” will refer to the Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage signed in 2003.
- 2 <https://ich.unesco.org/en> (Erişim Tarihi: 31.08.2017). By the time this paper was submitted (04.09.2018), “Dive into intangible cultural heritage!” page on UNESCO’s official website about ICH, where the visitors can make use of interactive visuals, had not been introduced or presented yet.
- 3 These countries are Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hun-



- gary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, (South) Korea, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Although the European Union (EU) is among the members of Development Assistance Committee as a legal entity, the paper does not regard members of EU beside the ones quoted above as developed countries.
- 4 In November 2018, a new page called “Dive into intangible cultural heritage!” was introduced on UNESCO’s official website about ICH. “Constellation” section of this page offers an insight to the interconnectedness of the concepts and the elements. However, since it does not allow one to choose more than one variable, this interactive tool still lacks the ability to show the elements sharing the same primary concepts. For example, one cannot see the common elements of concepts like “costumes” and “handicrafts” or “festivals”.
  - 5 Richard Kurin foresaw and stated in his essay that “The revival and revitalizations may, to ensure sustainability, turn religious practices, for example, toward tourist and commercial endeavours.” (2004:73). “Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in the 2003 UNESCO Convention: a critical appraisal”, *Museum International*, 56 (1/2), 66–77.
  - 6 The number in parentheses for each concept shows the number of its occurrences in the Lists.
  - 7 For more information, see Bouchenaki Mounir, “The interdependency of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage”, 14th ICOMOS General Assembly and International Symposium: Place, Memory, Meaning: Preserving Intangible Values in Monuments and Sites, 27–31 October 2003, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.
  - 8 For further discussion about Lavash, see Jonathan Levin, “From Nomad to Nation: On the Construction of National Identity through Contested Cultural Heritage in the Former Soviet Republics of Central Asia”, *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics* 50.1 (2017): 265 – 296. For further discussions about UNESCO, food and nationalistic approaches, see Atsuko Ichijo and Ronald Ranta, “International Organisations, Food and Nationalism”, *Food, National Identity and Nationalism*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. 146-163. Also see: Bahar Aykan, “The Politics of Intangible Heritage and Food Fights in Western Asia”, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 22 (2016):1-12. Also see: Clare Sammells, “Haute Traditional Cuisines: How UNESCO’s List of Intangible Heritage Links the Cosmopolitan to the Local”, *Edible Identities: Food as Cultural Heritage*, Routledge, 2014. 141-158.
  - 9 Other developed countries namely Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States, have not inscribed any element on the Lists. They are not parties of the Convention.
  - 10 12 Ethical Principles the Intergovernmental Committee accepted in 2015 depicts the concern about this issue. (<https://ich.unesco.org/en/ethics-and-ich-00866>)
  - 11 The newly published “Dive into intangible cultural heritage!” page offers interactive visuals for the visitors to see certain connections between the elements, concepts, countries, geographies, besides showing the connections of the threats to Intangible Cultural Heritage inscribed on the Urgent Safeguard List. However, none of the interactive visuals have the feature to filter their items according to years to allow the user see the change happening over the years. Besides, the data used is not presented in a downloadable form (in TSV or CSV format, or as an Excel file), and hence a researcher is still dependent on the non-user-friendly Excel file from the Statistics sections on the webpage.

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