Social Transformations Journal of the Global South

Volume 5 | Issue 2 Article 3

9-30-2017

Safeguarding Pabalat-Wrapped Pastillas in the Philippines: Problems and Possibilities of Community Participation

Patricia Gonzalez
Ateneo de Manila University, peachgonzalez@gmail.com

PATRICIA GONZALEZ

Safeguarding *Pabalat*-Wrapped *Pastillas* in the Philippines
Problems and Possibilities of Community Participation

This article describes the Philippine foodway and craft form of *pabalat*-wrapped *pastillas* by examining the different communities involved in its practice and preservation. It analyzes how the participatory framework reshapes the authorized heritage discourse and argues for a more pragmatic conceptualization of community participation that recognizes the different kinds of communities involved in heritage work, shows sensitivity to the politics at play, and aims at parity among actors—not exclusion. Tracing the history of *borlas de pastillas* and assessing its uses in tourism demonstrations, festivals, training programs and museum exhibits reveals the problematic issues of disinheritance, dissonance, memory, and ownership that emerge when dealing with intangible heritage.

KEYWORDS: Intangible heritage, community participation, heritage as process, cultural production, identity

The last thirty years have seen the concept of heritage expanded to include not only the material remains of the past but also the intangibles that give communities a sustained sense of identity: oral traditions, performing arts, traditional crafts, social practices, local knowledge, skills and practices that reflect a people's cosmology (2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Article 2). Reinforced by the participatory paradigm, reframed by calls from countries on the margins, and reshaped by a more anthropological understanding of culture that acknowledges non–Western precepts, the focus of the heritage discourse has now shifted from objects to people and the meaning-making and identity-affirming acts they undertake in order to incorporate heritage into their sense of self—actions which, in turn, give heritage value. The exhortation to place communities at the center of safeguarding efforts characterizes current cultural policies and efforts to conserve intangible heritage (Adell and others 2016:11). But fundamental questions about community participation still persist. What exactly does participation in heritage processes entail and who are these participating communities? This article looks closely at the actors involved in tourism demonstrations, festivals, training programs and museum exhibits that conserve the Philippine tradition of cooking, cutting candy wrappers and consuming *pabalat*-wrapped *pastillas*. By unpacking the definition of "community," this analysis helps to understand the form that participation takes and the kind of problems that arise when safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.

FROM TANGIBLE TO INTANGIBLE HERITAGE, FROM HEGEMONIC TO PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES

As a modern phenomenon stemming from post–Enlightenment Europe, the conscious effort to preserve the past traces its evolution from the 18th and 19th century beginnings of the conservation movement and through the history of museums (Rodwell 2007; Walsh 2002). In the past decades, there has been an acknowledgement that for too long there was a politics of knowledge that was dominated by the Global North. The imbalance stemmed in part from conservator-restorers being the most vocal voices in debates and relying on universalist conservation principles without nuances for non–Western contexts, in part from Europe and North America being the locus of academic theorizing and publication, and in part to the fact that the

disciplines that influence the field were heavily grounded in Western epistemologies (Winter 2013, 2014b). Termed the "authorized heritage discourse," this paradigm defined heritage as "material, (tangible), monumental, grand, 'good', aesthetic and of universal value" (Smith 2006 in Smith and Akagawa 2008:3). As a result—at least until the first half of the 20th century—regulatory frameworks and management practices dealt mainly with tangible heritage (i.e., the built or natural environment) and sought protection only for exceptional gems, usually natural and architectural sites selected for their artistic, aesthetic, scientific and historical value, and identified by technical experts and heritage professionals who were deemed the most appropriate stewards for their care (Silva 2015).

The expansion of the concept of heritage to include intangible expressions was influenced by countries from the margins. By the 1970s and 80s, the increasing influence of anthropological definitions on cultural policies and conservation practices had shifted attention away from the "aesthetic-historic" axis (Pereira 2007:16) and toward alternative ways of engaging with sites and artifacts by focusing on communities (Harrison and Rose 2010). Counter-hegemonic assertions from the Global South sought to redress the asymmetry of conservation and this is reflected in a series of international cultural policies: the 1976 Cultural Charter for Africa, 1979 Burra Charter and 1994 Nara Document on Authenticity. A "discourse of difference" based on different philosophical traditions, culturally specific preservation techniques and local knowledge challenged the prevailing definitions of authenticity predicated on original material (Winter 2014a).

Near the end of the 20th century, to protect cultural diversity against globalization's homogenizing tendency, UNESCO released a series of protocols: the 1989 Recommendation for the Protection of Traditional Culture and Folklore, the 1993 Living Human Treasures Program (based on the concept as set out in Japanese and Korean laws from the 1950s and 1960s), and later, the 2001 Proclamation of Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity—a result of a round of consultations driven by the Moroccan National Commission seeking to preserve cultural spaces like Jemaa el Fna Square (Bouchenaki 2003). These early attempts were criticized as monumentalizing intangible heritage (constructing a list of exceptional masterpieces rather than proposing guidelines for transmitting the skills and traditional knowledge needed to preserve them; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004) and failed to win widespread support for ICH—a failure attributed partly

to Western states' lack of familiarity with intangible elements since their long-established approach to engaging with the past was through conserving material remains (Bortolotto 2010) and partly to poor choice in terminology because for nations on the peripheries, "folklore" and "traditional culture" were labels reminiscent of colonial rhetoric (Seeger 2001 in Alivizatou 2008). However, these policies reflected the beginnings of a paradigm shift toward a more people-centered mindset. Heritage was no longer delimited to material things but was viewed instead as a cultural process equally (and according to some authors, arguably more importantly) concerned with the constitutive acts of engaging with these artifacts—constructing identities from the experience of communicating with, through and about objects (Smith 2006).

In 2003, the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage introduced the term intangible heritage into the lexicon and set out measures to sustain "intangible heritage." Recognizing that it was dealing with "living cultures," the Convention sought to protect intangible heritage not as a pure, fixed form but in all the various iterations of these expressions (Kurin 2007), as representations "constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history" (Article 2.1). Instead of protecting outstanding archetypes that were "representative of the best" (Silva 2015:11), this new formulation promoted the vernacular, advocating that ordinary people revitalize their heritage by engaging with it. From this point forward, communities have been the prime agents charged with safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION REEXAMINED

Since the rise of the participatory approach in the field of social development in the 1970s and its gradual spread to different spheres, community participation has been upheld as an ideal. But what does participation mean when interpreting, managing and preserving heritage? This is the central question that has academics and practitioners reconsidering the concept[1]: (1) against the backdrop of regulatory imperatives that require communities to be identifiers and nominators for listing heritage (UNESCO 2006); (2) in the face of so-called participatory practices that limit participation to

token appearances as representatives (Chirikure and others 2010); (3) in response to tourism development agendas calling for the community approach (Taylor 1995); and (4) in light of the succession of community-based projects ranging from grassroots communities engaging in "autonomous archiving" (Moore and Pell 2010) to indigenous peoples assessing the significance of sites (Prangnell, Ross and Coghill 2010) and using their local knowledge to interpret and conserve cultural resources (Chirikure and Pwiti 2008).

The participatory approach is modeled upon prescriptive typologies[2] that view "genuine" participation as excluding state actors and external institutions—understandably so, because the framework arose in reaction to the states' failure to involve their citizens in the decision-making processes that affected their lives. So conceived, "true" participation develops from the bottom up, with initiatives emerging organically without influence from "the top" and projects being autonomously controlled by communities who are their sole actors (Arnstein 1969, Moser 1989).

In heritage parlance, the "top" who are not supposed to impose their will upon communities are government representatives and heritage experts. The community who comprises the "bottom" is imagined as a fixed group who fits within tidy, bounded categories—a territorially defined population (e.g., residents of a geographically delimited region) or a spatially drawn homogenous group (e.g., based on historical or ethnic association to a place; Hertz 2015). Although conceptually neat, these binary oppositions (top/down, state or expert/community) do not fully reflect the complexities and nuance/s of heritage work. In praxis, heritage management is a collaborative process. Even the projects identified as community-led—where geographically defined communities are the catalyst, set the project goals, self-mobilize, organize and control the way objectives are met—in fact, cooperate with governments (accessing funds for restoration work, for example; Hodges and Watson 2000) and experts (relying on technical knowledge or using experts' status to legitimize projects; Smith, Morgan and van der Meer 2003).

The reality is that first, most heritage interventions are a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches, usually taking as their starting point what Cornwall (2008) calls "invited participation" when external institutions (e.g., government agencies, heritage-related NGOs, museums, university departments or researchers) initiate projects. And second, while fixed communities (e.g., residents, ethnic

groups) are among those most affected by heritage initiatives, they are not the only people with a stake in how projects play out. Different kinds of communities are often involved. Some fixed and spatially defined, others contingent and more heterogeneous, where "community" is a frame of reference, not an identity that attaches to place (Hertz 2015). These might include communities of interest—geographically defined collectivities whose shared aspirations or experiences render them stakeholders[3] (e.g., business industries, LGBT groups; Hoggett 1997 in Watson and Waterton 2010)—as well as "communities of practice" (Lave and Wenger 1991) such as what Adell and others (2015) propose, the heritage professionals whose sustained interactions are directed toward the shared purpose of ensuring the continuity of the sites and cultural practices that they study. Only by recognizing that we are dealing with multiple communities in any given project and by questioning the way these communities are drawn, can we critically examine the power relations that determine the scope of communities' participation in protecting their heritage.

SAFEGUARDING INTANGIBLE HERITAGE: CHALLENGES FROM THE PHILIPPINE PERSPECTIVE

DYING TRADITIONS AND DISINHERITANCE

The problem in dealing with "living cultures" is that sometimes the life cycle includes decline. If heritage is a means of meaning making for today's communities, if it is a continuous process of using the past to construct and negotiate identities in the present, then there can be moments when the values and inclinations of present-day communities do not harmonize with or support the past. As the birth, decline and revival of the *pabalat*-wrapped *pastillas* tradition shows, interest in heritage and its perceived relevance, waxes and wanes. When this occurs, it can lead to disinheritance with people distancing themselves from their heritage or not feeling fully entitled to claim ownership over it. This can also lead to the disappearance of a tradition or alternatively, its transposition into a tourism product.

In the municipality of San Miguel, Bulacan, there is a traditional practice of cutting candy wrappers called *pabalat* or *borlas de pastillas* which is positioned at the intersection of three forms of intangible heritage, namely: craftwork, cooking and festive use. The artifact that

is the tangible product of this custom is composed of: (1) the soft candy made from *carabao* (water buffalo) milk and sugar, and (2) its wrapper—a colorful, tissue-thin paper covering made from cutting designs into what is colloquially known as Japanese paper. The wrappers are often described as having tails because the 2x10 inch wrappers are cut into patterns of intertwined leaves and flowers, idyllic pastoral scenes and words.

The custom of making and exchanging *borlas de pastillas* developed in San Miguel because of (1) the abundance of ingredients for producing *pastillas*[4], (2) the existence of a landed elite with access to surplus time and wealth from whose ranks came the women who engaged in the labor-intensive practice of cutting sweet wrappers as a form of "conspicuous leisure" (Veblen 1902), and (3) the regular occurrence of the *fiesta* (festival) celebrating religious events and seasons of the agricultural life-cycle. The regularity of these public celebrations created a need for festive food distinct from everyday dishes; food that demarcated the separation between sacred (i.e., special occasion) and profane (Douglas 1975; Sahlins 1963). And so, by the early 1900s[5], *pabalat* making had become a popular practice in San Miguel (Alejandro and Santos 2003). The act of wrapping sweets in intricately cut, colorful wrappers and displaying them on glass *epergnes* (tiered trays) at food-laden tables "sacralized" (Gordon 1986:136) the ordinary *pastillas* transforming it into luxury food—that class of goods for which consumption is extravagant, unnecessary and restricted to special occasions (Van der Veen 2003:420). These annual *fiestas*, like many others held throughout the Philippines, were occasions to renew a sense of community with locals who had since migrated out (Roces 1980; Hornedo 2000). They attracted non-local visitors for a few days of feasting and festivities, and these guests served as "an unprejudiced outside witness—the only witness from the world outside family or kin before whom the family [could] afford to play out what its members conceive[d] as its proper nature" (du Boulay and Williams 1987:20 in Sutton 2001:48).

However, in the 20th century, Philippine *fiestas* were threatened by secularization, urbanization, and industrialization (Pinches 1992). The decreasing popularity of the *fiesta*, post-war out-migration of elite hosts who had once sponsored lavish *fiestas*, dwindling *carabao* numbers as tractors became ubiquitous in San Miguel, and the general loss of favor for ornamentation that accompanied the introduction of mass-produced goods brought about a decline in the use of *borlas de*

pastillas within the community. By the 1970s, the commercialization of agriculture had transformed foodways in San Miguel. From sumptuous public feasting that integrated community members, they became private acts of consumption in individual households that served to segregate people from one another—a typical pattern associated with the shift from agricultural to industrial economies (Counihan 1984:54 in Sutton 2001). The practice and artifact that once naturally flowed from the ecological, economic and sociocultural processes of community life became disconnected. By the 1990s, accounts in national newspapers were proclaiming the custom of exchanging *pastillas* in *pabalat* and the craft of cutting wrappers endangered.[6]

Today, *borlas de pastillas* is not often featured in celebrations within the municipal limits of San Miguel. While sweets producers and *pabalat* makers can name large public institutions and well-known persons (i.e., celebrities, governors) who use their wrappers, they do not actually consume or gift these themselves, citing the expense involved when *pastillas* wrapped in plain white paper will suffice, and saying that it is "*hindi pang karaniwang tao*" (not for the ordinary person), "*pang de kalidad lang*" (meant for people who are held high in esteem) or only used by those who want their celebrations to look old and traditional.[7] Reserving food for use only in particular occasions or by certain groups clearly expresses inequality and hierarchical differences (Kalcik 1984). In San Miguel, this has led to a belief among locals in their lack of entitlement to food art[8] and so *pabalat*-wrapped *pastillas* is limited to consumption by outsiders (i.e., *balikbayans*, tourists, foreigners) or the elite.

Pastillas wrapper artisans are used to receiving orders from the Office of the President for use of *borlas de pastillas* at state dinners. They cut wrappers for display at birthday celebrations of local politicians or because these are intended as gifts to visiting dignitaries and important public figures outside of San Miguel, but they hardly ever use *pabalat*-wrapped *pastillas* themselves. So uncommon is the practice of exchanging food art in the community nowadays that when it was used by a resident as a giveaway at her daughter's wedding, this was described as a unique souvenir and the decision was justified by the fact that the wedding was held outside of San Miguel and the groom and many of the wedding guests were not locals.

Although use of the *pabalat* within the community to date is something of an anomaly, locals consider it part of their history. But how do you sustain habitus and habitat when the conditions no longer

exist for celebratory displays at *fiestas*? How do you sustain hand-made, time-consuming, labor-intensive crafts in a globally homogenizing age of fast-paced lifestyles and mass-produced goods? In the case of San Miguel, the answer lay in transposing the endangered, outmoded practice into heritage.

> "Heritage is a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past . . . giv[ing] dying economies and dead sites a second life as exhibitions of themselves. … Heritage, in this context, is the transvaluation of the obsolete, the mistaken, the outmoded, the dead, and the defunct. Heritage is created through a process of exhibition (as knowledge, as performance, as museum display). Exhibition endows heritage thus conceived with a second life. This process reveals the political economy of display in museums and in cultural tourism more generally . . . adding the value of pastness and indigeneity." (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998:7, 149, 150)

No longer flourishing in its original sociocultural context as festive food, *pabalat*-wrapped *pastillas* was transformed into heritage—put on show as a tourist attraction since the 1980s, turned into the *raison d'être* of a series of festivals in the mid 2000s, and incorporated into a school curriculum then displayed in a museum for the past 10 years.

TOURISM AND DISSONANCE

All heritage projects that strive for community participation are politically engaged. From the outset, communities need to be defined and membership within these groups determined along certain criteria. Power relations among actors dictate which communities are included and whom are excluded.

In 1986, the Bulacan Tourism Council exhibited *borlas de pastillas* at a festival together with other folk arts and food typical of the province. As part of the program, they asked a *pabalat* artisan from San Miguel to demonstrate wrapper cutting in front of an audience. That same year, the Department of Education and Department of Tourism chose a schoolteacher from San Miguel to demonstrate *pastillas*-wrapper cutting at the ASEAN Konichiwa Trade Fair in

Japan. Buoyed by her experience, other teachers in the local high school learned or in some cases, relearned how to cut *pastillas* wrappers and later, taught this to their students.

In both instances, community participation meant involving San Miguel residents as performers to enact their heritage through wrapper-designing and cutting demonstrations. The tourism goals set by these regional and national government agencies shifted the focus of the tradition, removing specially wrapped *pastillas* from the social relations of festive food display and gift exchange and creating a visual experience to be consumed through what Urry (1990) terms the "tourist gaze." The private act of craftwork usually performed at home was transformed into a public display. As a tourist commodity, *pabalat* making became a process made visible, a means of self-representation to an external (now tourist) public; a statement of local identity connecting artisans to the wider world while simultaneously differentiating them from an outside Other. From the 1980s onwards, it was tourism and not *fiestas* that imported domestic visitors into the wider province of Bulacan for regional displays of wrapper-cutting demonstrations or exported *pabalat* artisans to the capital of Manila and further afield for staged performances of a no longer thriving way of life.

These two initiatives reveal the dissonance inherent in defining communities. In focusing the spotlight on the artisan and the craftwork involved in cutting wrappers, tourism efforts have downplayed *pabalat*'s function as candy wrapper. This has displaced the sweet producer and the work of cooking to the margins in the narrative of *borlas de pastillas*. Because it is now exceptionally rare for candy producer and wrapper maker to be one and the same person,[9] this dislocation can be contentious. Consequently, makers of *pastillas* candies have, on occasion, contested the value placed on food art. Hendry (1993), writing about the act of gift-wrapping in Japan, has argued how adornment is what gives value, taste, beauty and a sense of refinement to the objects wrapped within, making the wrapping even more substantial than what is wrapped. *Pabalat* artisans take a similar stance, asserting that ornamentation adds value because *pastillas* wrappers are beautiful to look at, show the heritage of the town, and add to the prestige of the person using specially decorated *pastillas*. Taking the opposing view, local sweet producers in San Miguel sometimes dispute how highly prized wrappers are. Although they recognize that paper-cut designs hold some appeal

for customers, they cannot reconcile why the cost of the wrapper should be higher than that of the milk candy (almost double) when after all, it is, in the words of one *pastillas* producer, "only a wrapper."

The tourism initiatives shed light on another difficulty involved in deciding who will participate—sometimes, people choose to exclude themselves from bounded categories because they do not identify with the characteristics that represent groups (Cornwall 2008). Traditional *pabalat* makers are usually artisans who come from a family of craftsmen and whose skills and repertoire of design motifs are passed down to them through their kin groups. By selecting a teacher to perform at the ASEAN Konichiwa Trade Fair rather than a traditional artisan, the Departments of Tourism and Education rekindled interest in *pabalat* cutting among other teachers and in so doing, helped create a new community of individuals who do not directly practice but facilitate its enactment. The schoolteachers who were part of the 1986 tourism-led revival do not represent themselves as artisans, simply calling themselves "teachers who know how to make wrappers." Because they do not fit the mold of the conventional artisan and do not engage in *pabalat* cutting as a sustained practice, they do not have a sense of themselves as *pabalat* makers. Despite *pabalat* cutting not being part of the formal curriculum at local schools, these teachers found ways to insert it into lesson plans, assigning it to students when they could not implement the syllabus imposed by the Department of Education or when they needed some activity to keep part of the class busy while other students were otherwise engaged. Mostly retired now, they cut *pabalat* not merely because they want to generate income, but because they recognize that this is part of their heritage. They see their role as guardians of a tradition that must be bequeathed. They have played a pivotal role in transmitting *pabalat*-cutting skills to younger San Migueleños but their efforts at helping secure the tradition for another generation have not been recognized in the media or affirmed by the tourist enterprise, both of which prefer traditional artisans and are, naturally, more invested in strengthening the typical, marketable image of artisan as, in the words of one artisan, "*dalagang bukid*" (*barrio* maiden) or the more romantic image that has captured people's imagination: a venerable, old craftswoman dedicating her lifetime to a craft that young people have no interest in—for how better to portray the very endangeredness of the practice in a human interest story?

Top-down heritage projects do not always preclude participation. When communities are provided the space and time in which to engage their collective imaginings, participation can result in the active reaffirmation of identity. As social occasions that bring together community members who share a similar ethnic, linguistic and historical background (Falassi 1987) and actively engage attendees and performers in totalizing sensory experiences of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch (Bauman and Sawin 1991), festivals create a heightened sense of "communitas" (Turner 1969). They are opportunities for people in the present to strengthen their links with the past, to affirm their connectedness to the locale and to reinforce relationships with other members. They provide a public forum for collective remembering but they can also be divisive in nature, maintaining internal hierarchies even as they heighten communal bonds through social exchange (Frost and Laing 2014). Culture bearers are not passive receptacles. They are reflexive agents who negotiate the meanings of embodied performances of heritage. When festivals draw boundaries along political lines and the identity constructed is a politically defined community that excludes non-supporters, then official interpretations can be repudiated through acts of deliberate forgetting and reframing.

In 2005, the national government launched the One Town, One Product (OTOP) Program to promote local industry in the regions with each province focusing on the product that best provided it with a competitive advantage. *Pastillas* was selected as San Miguel's OTOP product and showcased at a festival in Las Vegas, USA. The *borlas de pastillas* presented in Las Vegas were designed by a teacher from an elementary school in San Miguel, and cut by teachers from two local schools using materials provided by a local politician. At the behest of the same politician, the town's annual festival for 2006 and 2007 were repackaged as *pastillas* festivals.

The goals of the 2006 *Pastillas* Festival as identified by the local government unit were both economic and cultural. It aimed to attract investors, prepare *pastillas* for introduction into international markets, lay the foundations for an eventual San Miguel seal of quality that could be conferred upon by local *pastillas* brands, and establish an association of *pastillas* producers. It was, according to the incumbent mayor who was quoted in Manila Bulletin on 7 May 2006, also a celebration of tradition

> "*Pastillas* making is not just . . . work to us. It's a way of life . . . a unifying factor for us. Many families here have survived because of it. . . . Through this festival, we want to show our gratitude to the craft that made us survive. We want to preserve the tradition and pass it on to the younger generation."

Although the objectives of the festivals were determined by the local government, the communities involved were more broadly defined than those of tourism activities. They included makers of *borlas de pastillas*, sweet producers, local schools, the resident population, and non-residents attending the festival as audience members. Unlike the "front stage" performances (Goffman 1978) put on for tourists where *pabalat* artisans consciously try to convey a traditional *dalagang bukid* image and restrict themselves to more traditional designs, the festivals, with their "play" frame—the blurring of conventions and suspension of conventional boundaries that takes place in the liminal, ambiguous space of the festival-as-spectacle (Turner 1969); the sense of enchantment and promise of possibility (Picard and Robinson 2011:17)—granted organizers and participants a greater degree of autonomy. Certainly ,the designers of costumes and banners had considerably more freedom to reconceptualize *pabalat* and find new applications for it. More significantly, however, the festivals, as opportunities for intensifying solidarity and articulating collective identity (Durkheim 1912), offered a wider scope for participation than tourist demonstrations.

The 2006 festival was popular and well attended. The town plaza was decorated with *pastillas* wrapper-shaped bunting, wrapper-making demonstrations were held in front of the town hall, and food stalls selling locally made sweets surrounded the church. The festival program included a street-dancing contest where performers (mostly local students) were attired in *pastillas*-inspired costumes. It closed with an evening show presented by celebrity acquaintances of the mayor. San Migueleños recount how the sheer volume of people made it impossible for everyone to fully appreciate the dances and so they were performed again the following week in a local gymnasium. By comparison, the 2007 festivities did not, to people's recollection, constitute a *pastillas* festival. The 2007 event received no media attention and was not well attended.

Though never manifestly expressed, politicking was its aim. Because it coincided with the campaigning period for local elections,

the 2007 festival had a decidedly more political flavor. Large banners containing images of *pastillas* wrappers decorated the municipal hall with some designs created around the logo of the mayor. For the street parade—the main event—three groups of dancers were interspersed in between two school marching bands, a procession of *carabao*, and motorcades of civic groups and campaigning local politicians connected with the party of the then incumbent mayor. The 2007 festivities lacked the community-building processes that help to frame people's participation in a festival (e.g., the long drawn-out route of selecting committees, determining activities and persons involved, and deciding on a minutiae of logistical decisions). More significantly, it too overtly resembled a political rally—a comparison that becomes all too obvious in the way locals counterpose the 2007 festival to the parade of candidates and the star-studded variety show which the opposing political party had thrown the day before instead of contrasting it with the 2006 festival. Because the 2007 event was so clearly manipulated to legitimize a political regime, local residents, even those actively involved in the first festival, disregard its meaning-making potential. A different government official won at the local elections the following week and 2007 was the last of the *pastillas*-related festivals.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS, MUSEUM EXHIBITS AND OWNERSHIP

Communities involved in safeguarding intangible heritage perform difficult balancing acts within contested domains of ownership. Even the seemingly fixed boundaries that define territorial communities are not always easily drawn. Sometimes definitions produce hierarchies of scale and conflict can only be avoided through compromise.

In 2007, *pastillas*-wrapper making was integrated into the curriculum of a university in the national capital: the University of Santo Tomas. Every year, from 2007 to 2017, the College of Fine Arts and Design has invited artisans from a spectrum of traditional Filipino arts[10] to teach their craft. At the end of the sessions, an exhibition displaying the students' output takes place in collaboration with the university museum.

The art program is meant to benefit the university's students. Consequently, the geographically defined community that participates is not comprised of San Miguel residents but more broadly, of Filipino

students. Since the university's art faculty shares the responsibility for transmitting skills with practicing artisans, the community of experts who run the training sessions come from different provinces throughout the country. But because *pabalat* cutting is only one of the topics covered in the program, only one *pabalat* maker trains students and shares the techniques of her craft. It is noteworthy that the artisan who, until her demise in 2016, was involved in this program and the accompanying museum exhibits, is the same woman featured in many of the tourism demonstrations and representations in the media. The recognition garnered her renown for her artistry, granted her greater access to the customer market ensuring that, for her, craftwork was a feasible source of livelihood, and gave her the chance to develop a number of her own designs and assert intellectual property rights over them. Over time, *pabalat* cutting became a source of social and cultural capital increasing her networks and esteem. She was then recognized by the National Commission on Culture and the Arts for her contribution to indigenous arts and crafts in 2000. These are the kind of institutional and structural supports that make craftwork viable and sustain bearer communities by giving "attention not just to artifacts but above all to persons, as well as to their entire habitus and habitat, understood as their life space and social world" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2006:165). It is under these favorable conditions that traditional art forms truly become protected because they are economically rational and both culturally and socially desirable. Paradoxically however, in this case, valorizing one artisan and conflating the craftsman with the whole craft impeded the emergence of a wider community of artisans and limited the possibility for more inclusive participation.

The program's aims include fostering appreciation for traditional art forms amongst its pupils, raising awareness about *pabalat* cutting and other traditional arts among the university's undergraduates and museum visitors, imparting craft skills to design students, documenting the art form, and creating an archive of *pabalat* designs. Because it encourages students to reinterpret traditional art, the program has introduced innovation into *pabalat* design and function. Over the years, the framed wrappers exhibited in the museum have strayed from more typical designs[11] to incorporate patriotic Filipino icons like the *parol* (star-shaped Christmas lantern), flag and *jeepney* (jeep); religious symbols (the cross); and commonplace images like fruits, hearts and numbers. One year, lampshades and light fixtures embellished with paper cuttings were displayed in the museum when

students applied their *pabalat*-making skills to product design. This output, permutations of *pabalat*, can be considered as exemplifying the kind of "reanimation, … reshaping, [and] creative engagement with the past" (Foley 2014:381) envisioned in the 2003 Convention on Intangible Heritage as necessary in keeping cultural expressions relevant and showing proof of a lived and living practice. And as Filipinos, the students enrolled in the program can claim ownership of *borlas de pastillas* as their national heritage.

But there is a disjunction between this national program's experimental approach to *pabalat* design and the more conservative local orientation in San Miguel. Teachers in the local schools prefer to adhere to well-entrenched, timeworn patterns and allow only minimal improvisation, letting students insert lettering into the skirt of the *Maria Clara*[12], for example, but requiring that pupils stick to the general outline of the design. Long-practicing traditional *pabalat* artisans are slightly more open to deviating from familiar designs and inserting new imagery but the more artistic among them have a strong sense of ownership over their creations. They are cautious about sharing their catalogue of works and seek copyright protection over their designs. While it is understandable that makers should be acknowledged for their individual creativity, the overly protectionist stance advanced by intellectual property ownership conflicts with the view that folk crafts are a shared resource belonging to a community as part of its heritage (Scrase 2002) existing in "versions and variants rather than in a single, original, and authoritative form" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2006:165). It promotes exclusionary, individualistic attitudes rather than inviting inclusive participation by engaging a greater number of audiences in craftwork.

The issue of ownership raises a number of questions: If you do not have free reign to experiment with designs, to explore alternative strands and propose new variations, or to consciously choose to reject innovation in favor of custom, then how fully are you exercising your ownership over a practice? At what point does your exercise of individual ownership impinge on others' rights to a collectively owned tradition? If you eschew established norms and choose innovation, how much change is acceptable? How much creative engagement is justifiable on the ground of keeping traditions vital and dynamic? And who determines when current adaptations have so transformed a cultural expression as to render it unrecognizable or objectionable on some other ground? The Convention suggests that the appropriate

arbiter is the community that identifies with and recognizes itself in the traditions being safeguarded. But because heritage exists at different spatial scales—local, regional, national, pan-regional, and global—community ownership can be contentious. Perhaps in this case, rather than pitting local and national versions of heritage against one another to determine which has primacy in dictating the direction that *pabalat* designs take, it is more prudent to adhere to a "hierarchical harmony model" (Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge 2000:205) which allows heritage at different spatial scales to coexist harmoniously and present a picture of "unity in diversity" with local iterations of *borlas de pastillas* continuing in the more traditional vein and national variants being more inventive.

THE WAY FORWARD

Efforts to sustain the *pabalat*-wrapped *pastillas* heritage are fragmented due to a lack of coordination, politically motivated definitions of community, and the disparate, sometimes conflicting aims of the communities involved in these initiatives. As suggested by Waterton and Smith (2010), Fraser's notion of "parity of participation" finds appropriate application in dealing with community interactions that are embedded in asymmetrical power relations. Only when members are represented (have political voice), receive recognition, and have a fair claim in the distribution of economic resources, can they interact with one another as peers. Under this model, participation becomes not a matter of excluding "the top." It is rather, about including diverse groups and creating a space for meaningful involvement so they can engage with each other not in hierarchical relations as dominant (expert or state-sanctioned implementing agency) and subordinate (passive subject of a heritage product), but as co-equal partners who bring their different voices to the conversation.

In the context of *borlas de pastillas*, this entails redressing "cultural misrecognition" (Fraser 2003 in Waterton and Smith 2010) by inviting sweets producers to the discourse so that they too are involved in deciding what this heritage means. It necessitates rectifying the misrecognition and "economic maldistribution" (Fraser 2003 in Waterton and Smith 2010) that, for 30 years, saw the same artisan benefitting from heritage interventions to the exclusion of other *pabalat* makers. It means bringing geographically defined communities

together with communities of practice and interest so that San Migueleños, non–San Miguel based Filipino students, local schools situated in San Miguel, artisans, sweets producers, "teachers who know how to make wrappers," university art faculty, local government units and national agencies can work collaboratively toward safeguarding this tradition. These empowered communities, variously defined and already involved in some measure, can come together to formulate a shared vision for how to sustain this intangible practice, marshal the considerable resources that governments can provide and work to develop broad-based support for safeguarding initiatives. Though the different communities' attempts have not been concerted thus far, they are not incompatible.

Producing marketable tourism commodities need not undermine the preservation of heritage. Teachers who envision themselves as custodians of tradition can help bridge the gap by reaching out to *pastillas* producers and filling in the space left behind from cutting sweet makers out of the narrative. The way forward will involve documenting the revitalization efforts to date, transmitting the skills needed for its continued use, encouraging an attitude of creative engagement with the craft as a form of collective- and self-expression and as a way of keeping the historical relevant, as well as devising opportunities to enact and embody this heritage in festive displays and exchanges so that current norms (non use) are reoriented toward entitlement (consuming food art with pride) and more fully utilize *pabalat*-wrapped *pastillas*' communicative potential as gift (to make statements about the giver's roots and identity).

Safeguarding intangible heritage is not a matter of musealizing, fossilizing or trivializing dynamic, mutable cultures. Heritage is the tangible touchstone of history but it is also performed through personal, lived experiences. The *borlas de pastillas* tradition is as much the candy wrapper as it is the meaning-making process of sitting down with scissors and paper in hand to cut time-honored designs or craft one's own. It is the act of associative, collective remembering that takes place when gifting *pastillas*, unwrapping *pabalat* at a special occasion, or celebrating it in festive ritual. As Kurin (2007:13), writing in the early years of the Convention on Intangible Heritage's implementation admonishes, in the end, "[i]t is the dynamic social processes of creativity, of identity-making, of taking and respecting the historically received and remaking it as one's own that is to be safeguarded." Communities are at the heart of these processes and deserve to be better understood.

NOTES

1 See volume 16 of the International Journal of Heritage Studies (2010) and Adell and others (2015).

2 See Cornwall (2008) for a discussion of Arnstein's ladder of participation and Pretty's typology of participation.

3 Gonzalez (2011) describes an example of how communities of interest and communities of residence work together toward participatory engagement through site interpretation, art/music festivals and capacity-building programs in the cultural regeneration of the Ouseburn district in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in England.

4 From the 1700s to the early 1900s, sugarcane was produced for foreign export in large quantities (Tangco 1997) and the *carabao* (water buffalo) was the main draft animal for plowing and milling rice and sugar.

5 Exactly when paper cutting first began to be practiced in San Miguel is not documented. However, a case can be made for assuming its existence within the locale by the end of the 19th century. Alejandro and Santos (2003) credit the cross-cultural practice of paper cutting among Mexico, China and the Philippines to Galleon trade route connections which ran from 1565 to 1815. Tracing life histories in San Miguel places the birth of the earliest remembered wrapper maker from a known family of artisans in the 1870s. Typical wrapper patterns follow the *art nouveau* style—a movement that began in the 1890s and was popularized in the early 1900s. The idyllic pastoral scenes commonly depicted in *pabalat* designs are typical of Victorian-era concerns in the early days of the Industrial Revolution and where words figure as part of the design, they incorporate Spanish terms rather than Filipino words.

6 Cordero-Fernando (1992), Almario (2002), Alejandro and Santos (2003) make the same claims. See also the article of Rachel Barawid,"San Miguel: *Pastillas* Country" in Manila Bulletin, 6 May 2006; "Lace Papers of Another Time" in Sun Star, 12 August 2001 sec. B; and "A *Pastillas* Wrapper Maker's Cutting Edge" in Philippine Daily Inquirer, n.d., sec. D-8.

7 These views and others discussed throughout this article were expressed by people whom I interviewed in the course of intermittent fieldwork in San Miguel, Bulacan from May 2007 to June 2008.

8 A term used by the late Filipino food journalist Doreen Fernandez (1994) to refer to embellished edibles. This includes such decorative food as *pastillas* in *pabalat*, *burdadong minatamis* (carved pickled fruits and vegetables; also from San Miguel), the *kiping* of Lucban, Quezon (colorful square or leaf-shaped rice wafers that decorate houses during the Pahiyas festival which are subsequently eaten grilled or fried) and the *Pan de San Nicolas* and *Turumba* cookies of Pampanga and Laguna (biscuits molded or cut into the patron saint or the virgin Mary and eaten on religious feast days).

9 The typical *pabalat* artisan is an elder woman who cuts wrappers at home as a female strategy for balancing paid with domestic work, childcare provision with household management. Craftwork is slotted in between the daily demands of running a household, done while watching television or when artisans cannot sleep. It has been described by artisans as "*pang libang*" (hobby) or "*pampalipas oras*" (pastime). In contrast, milk candy production takes place in factories adjacent to the company owner's home (or among small-scale producers, in extensions of the home specially demarcated for such purposes) with a staff of more than 10 employees. *Pastillas* making is, at present, a small- to medium- scale industry in San Miguel. One of the largest commercial bakeries in the country today sources *pastillas* sweets for nationwide distribution from two San Miguel factories.

10 These include *taka* (papier mâché) from Paete, Laguna; *puni* (palm leaf folding) from Malolos and *bordado* (fruit carving) from San Miguel, both in Bulacan; *bulakaykay* (bamboo shaving) from Hagonoy, Bulacan; and *abalorio* (beading) from Pateros, Rizal.

11 Common designs include the *Maria Clara* (a woman epitomizing femininity, dressed in the national costume and holding a fan), *bahay kubo* (lowland Filipino houses constructed from nipa thatch and bamboo), and *nagbabayo* (a farmer hand threshing rice). Where words figure as part of the design, they incorporate terms like *recuerdo* (remembrance), *amistad* (friendship) and *mabuhay* (welcome). Commissioned paper cut wrappers might include the name of the celebrant or host.

12 A woman who embodies the traditional Filipino ideals of femininity: modest, gentle, and refined. See note 11.

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PATRICIA GONZALEZ holds an MA in anthropology from Ateneo de Manila University and an MA in Heritage Management from Newcastle University. She was previously a lecturer at Ateneo de Manila, a research associate for the Institute of Philippine Culture, and a volunteer coordinator for The National Trust for Scotland.