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The Frictional Geography of Cultural Heritage. Grounding the Faro Convention into Urban Experience in Forlì, Italy

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Cultural heritage is nurtured by, and nurtures, space and place dynamics that are multidimensional and ambiguous. In this paper I engage with a ‘frictional geography’ of heritage-making to question the principles and practices of the Faro Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Council of Europe, 2005), a charter predicated on the principle of citizens’ inclusion and co-operation. The friction metaphor has emerged in the last decade in social and cultural geographies, bringing together globalisation, mobilities and more-than-human approaches. I will refer to an ethnographic study based in Forlì, Italy, where the local administration has been supporting a Faro process since 2016. Reflecting on this case study, I ask: What happens once the principles of local democracy and heritage co-construction are enacted on the ground of everyday urban experiences? What frictions, conflicts and ambiguities arise? The case of Forlì serves as a useful illustration of how diverse acceptances of the same heritage-making process coexist and ‘rub’ against one another. A
‘frictional geography’ approach might also be employed to explore other place-making processes, especially those accompanied by the claim of the right of citizens to participate, on the one hand, and increasing societal conflicts, on the other.

**Keywords:** Frictional geographies; Cultural heritage; Heritage-making; Local participation; Faro Convention; Italy.

**Introduction**

In recent years there has been an emerging acceptance of the notion that cultural heritage is subjective, in both a tangible and an intangible way, and is co-constructed. As a result, there is general agreement that cultural heritage combines complex entanglements of practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills, with artefacts, infrastructures and sites, to identify a selective process of ‘something from the past’ and give it value in the present. Recognising heritage as a social construction, cultural geographers have explored how cultural heritage is enacted through space and place, thus helping to identify its contradictory, partial and dissonant character (Atkinson, 2005, 2008; Crang & Tolia-Kelly, 2010; Harvey, 2001; Lowenthal, 1998; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996).

Finding a ‘democratic’ way to conceive cultural heritage, one that is more inclusive of the cultural and spatial identities of heterogeneous social groups, is the subject of much debate within the social sciences and humanities, especially among geographers (Harrison, 2013; Waterton, Smith, & Campbell, 2006; Waterton & Watson, 2015b). In parallel, there has been a
flourishing of initiatives through which local communities are claiming the right to define how their story should be narrated (see, for example, Beel & Wallace, 2018). Such initiatives found legitimisation on the local scene and also, lately, on an international level through the framework *Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society*, an international charter proposed by the Council of Europe in 2005 and entered into force in 2011 (also known as the Faro Convention after the Portuguese city where the first Member States signed it). Despite being quite well known by heritage professionals, the Faro Convention has received very little attention among scholars, in comparison with other charters proposed by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The aim of the Faro Convention is to support co-operative participation, which is defined in the *Faro Convention Action Plan Handbook 2018-2019* as ‘the action of working together to [achieve the] same goal, beginning from the first steps and gradually constructing together’ (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 23). On the one hand, the Faro Convention is a transnational charter that needs major adaptations to be implemented and become operational at the national level; on the other, it is already being experimented with at the local level, even in countries that have not yet signed or ratified it.¹ In addition, the Faro Convention is being used as a reference to support creative methodologies and to stimulate awareness of the social and spatial diversity of cultural heritage.²

Within this context, this paper uses a ‘frictional geography’ approach to question the apparent repositioning towards a more horizontal and inclusive acceptance of cultural heritage. I use the term ‘frictional geography’ to refer to the productive dimension connected with contestations, glitches and instability that occur once the universal claims of the Faro Convention are brought to life through a variety of messy practical encounters at the local level. This paper refers
specifically to an ethnographic study based in Forlì, Italy, where the local administration has supported the Faro process from 2016 to 2018. The cityscape of Forlì is characterised by architecture dating from the Fascist regime (1922-1943), which has recently become a feature used to bolster cultural and tourism policy in the city (Battilani, Bernini, & Mariotti, 2018).

What happens when the principles of local democracy and heritage co-construction advocated by a charter promulgated by an international organisation are enacted on the ground of everyday urban experiences? How is participation practiced, perceived and entangled with space at the local level? What frictions, conflicts and ambiguities arise? The hypothesis supported here is that a more open-ended and inclusive way of conceiving cultural heritage intrinsically includes frictions, although this acknowledgement is not yet embraced by the very people that engage in participatory heritage-making processes, as the case study will show. This means that there is a need for an approach that is better able to grapple with the entanglements and contradictions of a variety of on-going heritage-making trajectories that intersect public engagement. I call this approach the ‘frictional geography’ approach. This approach borrows from a variety of recent studies that have made use of the friction metaphor and that can be variously related to the study of global connections, the mobility turn and the more recent attempt to reframe the ontological, epistemological and methodological status of cultural geography in relation to human-non-human relationships.

This paper is divided into four main sections. Firstly, it revises the concepts of cultural heritage in light of relevant academic debates within social and cultural geographies. In so doing, a more nuanced and ‘frictional’ account of cultural heritage will be presented. Secondly, it presents Forlì as a case study. The city of Forlì introduced an institutional framework to deploy more democratic heritage-making practices, which will be discussed in detail. This section also
describes the methods used to collect data for this research. Thirdly, the paper analyses the framework adopted in Forlì through the frictions that have arisen as the knowledge expressed in the Faro Convention travels through different institutional levels and scales, and it takes on a variety of forms. Finally, I will reference ‘frictional geography’ in an attempt to describe the social and cultural complexities of present day heritage-making and extend the approach to other place-making processes.

**The Frictions of Cultural Heritage: From Authorised Discourse to Place Performances**

Geographers have engaged with heritage from a variety of perspectives and have unveiled how the selective character of heritage is always nurtured by, and nurtures, space and place dynamics that are permanently multidimensional and ambiguous (Atkinson, 2005; Graham, Ashworth, & Tunbridge, 2000; Lowenthal, 1998). Heritage has co-existed comfortably with other typical geographical concepts, namely landscape, to feed academic, political and popular imaginations (Harvey, 2015). For a long time, heritage-making revolved around artefacts, monuments or sites, selected as the ‘physical’ representations of an identity that embodied the moral values espoused by the culture surrounding them. More often than not, these heritage markers were bound up with the dominant social classes or national identities, tastes and achievements (Graham et al., 2000) and contributed to the affirmation of an ‘authorised heritage discourse’ (Smith, 2006, p. 11). This discourse has, for a long time, privileged monumentality and grand narratives, in the understanding that the value of artefacts and sites is intrinsic, objective, and tied to time, depth and scientific or expert judgement often based on the aesthetic (Smith, 2006; Vecco, 2010).
More recently, a growing body of literature is focusing on heritage, articulating a strong desire to identify and engage community participation in heritage management, interpretation and conservation work; often expressed as community outreach or social and cultural inclusion (Hodges & Watson, 2000; Johnston & Marwood, 2017; Newman & McLean, 1998; Silverman, Waterton, & Watson, 2017). In this revised form, heritage-making challenges the legitimisation of national and other cultural or social identities. In line with Massey (2005), in academic debate, heritage is today considered to be connected with place as an ever-shifting constellation of trajectories through which we are ‘thrown-together’ in and with space; trajectories that challenge the ‘territorial’ (Agnew, 1994) or ‘local’ trap (Born & Purcell, 2006) into which heritage may fall. A more sound conception of heritage-making takes into consideration the sense of affect, drawing on the work of Thrift (2008) and the notion of non-reflective thinking which transforms place into performances, bringing centrality to bodies and senses (Waterton and Watson, 2015a). This concept shifts the focus back to the individual and, therefore, the right for a subjective and emotional understanding of heritage (Waterton, 2014) and the importance of ‘mundane’ heritage places (Atkinson, 2008).

Heritage, therefore, is a concept that pivots on biases and dissonance, especially when it comes to represent controversial versions of the past (Graham et al., 2000; Lowenthal, 1998). It is within this context that ‘frictional geography’ emerges as a fruitful approach to research on heritage-making.

In the last decade, the friction metaphor has been intermittently used in geographical reflections. It can now be considered as part of an emergent vocabulary used to highlight conflict that differs from the typical vocabulary that was linked to the notions of power and resistance of the so-called new cultural geography of the late 1980s and 1990s (Anderson, 2017, 2019a, 2019b; Ash, Anderson, Gordon, & Langley, 2018; Rose, 2015). Tsing (2005), an anthropologist, was
one of the first to use this metaphor in the field of social sciences and humanities in her work on transnational environmental activism, which focused on how ‘universal dreams and schemes’ come to life in ‘the grip of worldly encounter’ (Tsing, 2005, p.1). The ‘awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference’ – that is to say, frictions – ‘reminds us that heterogeneous and unequal encounters can lead to new arrangements of culture and power’ (Tsing, 2005, p.3). The accent, therefore, is on the double-edged and mobile character of frictions that arise while people, ideas or objects move, creating glitches, but also producing ideas for future developments. Tsing’s (2005) work has been expanded upon by a variety of geographers, including Hayter and Barnes (2012), who consider how neoliberalism is reworked, remoulded and reproduced within locally specific assemblages. In fact, as frictions occur, ‘universals’ mutate and hybridise and are reshaped by various local social, institutional and material peculiarities. Gregson, Crang, & Antonopoulous (2017), use the term to focus on the space of action between production and consumption, as articulated by the global and mobile connections of supply-chain capitalism. A major branch within geography that has made use of the metaphor of friction is the one marked by the mobility turn (Cresswell, 2011, 2012a, 2014b; Cresswell & Merriman, 2011; Merriman, 2015, 2016, 2017). Cresswell (2010) considers friction to be one of the constitutive forces of mobility. He focuses mainly on arrest and stop, but he also stresses that friction is a force that makes the very fact of mobility possible. This means that frictions are productive – they are not ‘aberrations or external shocks but parts of how value is made and captured’ (Gregson, et al., 2017, p. 383) – a characteristic that is also central to the use of the term in more recent accounts within the field of cultural geography (see Anderson, 2017, 2019a, 2019b). This branch represents another facet of the use of the metaphor, bringing attention to digital cultural objects (Rose, 2015) and also – and more
interestingly in the context of this article – on the practical, affective and emotional entanglements around frictions (Ash et al., 2018).

Albeit very different, these three branches are marked by similar characteristics, including the recognition of movement – of people, ideas and objects – as a key element of present socio-spatial entanglements undercut by a deep critique of the concepts of globalisation and mobility as smooth processes. They also share a focus on ‘lived’ encounters, be they human-to-human or human-non-human, to observe multi- and transcalar relationships and assemblages.

Within this context, I will now turn to the case of Forlì, where ‘universal’ claims around heritage co-creation as expressed by the framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society have accompanied a controversial project of heritage-making called ATRIUM. The project focuses on the architecture of totalitarian regimes that marks the cityscape and provides space for ordinary every day city living. Dissonance is somehow intrinsic in any kind of heritage (Lowenthal, 1998; Smith, 2006; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996), but it is particularly evident in some situations, such as when the commodification of heritage, for instance for tourism purposes, disrupts the residents’ practices in relation to that heritage, or conflicts with the traumatic experiences of a past that included wars, abuse of power, violence and captivity (Battilani et al., 2018). In such situations, the translation of the democratic criteria of inclusion and legitimacy of the Faro Convention from the formality of a charter to the messiness of ordinary urban experience makes the ‘frictional geography’ of cultural heritage even more frictional, as will be explored in the next sections.

**Trying to Turn an Undemocratic Past into a Participatory Process of Heritage-Making**
Forli (approx. 118,000 inhabitants at the beginning of 2018) is located at the centre of the prosperous Italian region of Emilia-Romagna. The economy of the city grew in the 20th Century, thanks to a rich, diverse, agricultural and manufacturing industry, both still representing important sectors. The modern history of Forli and its surrounding area is closely linked to the political history of Italy at the beginning of the 20th Century. At that time, the city was still more of a rural society that was rapidly becoming the object of unprecedented interest. Mussolini – whose political career rose rapidly at the beginning of the 1920s and who was appointed Prime Minister on 29 October, 1922 – was born some kilometres away from Forli. As is well known, Fascism was characterised by nationalism and populism, and the *Terre del Duce* (an *ante litteram* brand coined at that time) were significantly invested in supporting these traits. Forli received investment from a major urban requalification plan that highlighted the facet of welfare, progress and majesty of the regime. Impressive architecture (partly in the eclectic style and partly in the rationalist style (Prati & Tramonti, 1999)) was used to enact place performances of an authorised heritage discourse consistent with Fascist propaganda (Proli, 2017).

Following WWII, the public significance of that built heritage changed completely, from being celebrative to being entirely negative. What to do with the material legacy of a totalitarian state is always a thorny issue. Such a past might also condition the understanding of the term heritage as something that is not necessarily to be cherished and celebrated (Macdonald, 2006). The strategies undertaken to cope with this problem have been diverse: Germany, for instance, most often opted for destruction, until the late 1980s, when the early creation of visitors’ centres appeared and opened the doors to the more recent ‘critical preservation’ turn, that is, preservation supplemented by educational material, which is intended to offer the tools to interpret such sites and desacralise them (Macdonald, 2009; Malone, 2017). By comparison,
the urge to come to terms with the past has been felt less strongly in Italy, that opted for uncritical preservation so that, in the words of Malone (2017), Italy’s Fascist heritage is ‘hidden in plain sight’ (p. 44). While the explicit, mainly decorative, elements recalling Fascism were destroyed, the structures were not. The station, the schools and the blocks of houses quickly lost the symbolic value connected with the regime but maintained their civil function, albeit not necessarily as originally designed. In Forlì – as elsewhere in Italy – dealing with the past involved focusing only on the buildings’ current use to prevent traumatic, and problematic, experiences (Legg, 2007).

The 1990s brought about the restoration of major projects of the Fascist regime in Rome, in the context of a growing appreciation of the interwar architectural style (Arthurs, 2010; Malone, 2017); this marked a modest shift towards viewing such heritage as an opportunity to better understand the Fascist legacy, an issue which in Italy has scarcely been faced, and turn it into political education (Carter & Martin, 2017). Also in Forlì, by the turn of the 21st Century, local historians had started reclaiming the right and, possibly, the need, to talk about their traumatic past instead of silencing it (Proli, 2017). In parallel, in 2010, a bid was won by the city on an EU territorial cooperation programme project which involved managing the dissonant heritage of Forlì and changing it from ‘minimalism’ to ‘inclusivism’ (Battilani et al., 2018). The aim of the project was ‘the valorization of cultural heritage in order to provide a platform for economic growth from investment in cultural tourism’ (Leech, 2013, p. 150). Led by the Municipality of Forlì, the 3-year project ATRIUM – Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the XX° Century in Urban Management – comprised 18 partners from 11 different European countries who had experienced diverse kinds of dictatorship during the 20th Century. One further step was the recognition of ATRIUM within the programme of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in 2014. The re-use of buildings dating back to the Fascist regime is common to many
other parts of Italy, but what is unconventional in the case explored here is Forlì’s attempt to focus on rationalist architecture as a way to explore the diverse acceptances it could evoke; something particularly ‘frictional’ considering the controversial past it deals with.

While aiming to provide a new cultural tourism product, ATRIUM Route also aimed to ‘promote a new look at this uncomfortable heritage while maintaining a critical and ethical repudiation of the regimes’ as indicated in Article 2 of the Statute of the ATRIUM Association. The risk here was that ATRIUM would be helping to legitimise Fascism by recognising the aesthetic qualities of certain buildings dating from that period, an issue that is at the core of more recent projects concerning the material legacies of totalitarian regimes (Macdonald, 2006). For this reason, ATRIUM widened its scope from architecture to a more intangible acceptance of cultural heritage (Vecco, 2010) with the aim of emphasising the dissonance Fascism brought, not hide it (Leech, 2013). Therefore, since the very beginning, ATRIUM tried to enlarge the arena of actors involved in its management by involving a network of collaborators, ranging from the local association of tourist guides to local historians’ associations, professionals and activists in the cultural and creative sectors, including any individual who might be interested in exploring and activating a reflection around the tabooed heritage framed by ATRIUM. While a variety of actions were undertaken to verify the willingness of the local community to support such a project in 2013 (Battilani et al., 2018), the Municipality of Forlì decided to look at a more specific tool to foster local participation and citizens’ inclusion by looking at the Faro Convention in 2016.

**ATRIUM Route and the Faro Convention**
The Faro Convention is at par with other charters that have contributed to a change of pace in the subjective recognition of heritage as it is understood in its tangible and intangible expressions and as the product of negotiating processes. Other examples are the Australian ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (also known as the Burra Charter) (1979) and the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) (Smith, 2006; Vecco, 2010; Waterton et al., 2006). The opening articles of the Convention present the basic aims and scope of the document, recognising cultural heritage as a ‘right’ but also as an individual and collective responsibility. Cultural heritage is defined as ‘a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time’ (Art. 2).7 The Faro Convention considers cultural heritage from a cross-disciplinary perspective and suggests cultural heritage to be the main asset in dealing with European societal challenges and in the construction of a European identity through ‘unity in diversity’ that goes beyond mere national interests (Art. 3).

While the convention recognises a subjective acceptance of heritage (as expressed by a variety of heritage communities), it stresses that heritage should allow for ‘a shared source of remembrance’ (Art. 3), which is particularly difficult when dealing with an obscure past, such as in the case of ATRIUM. Another problematic aspect of the Faro Convention is the difficult interaction between the upscaling and downscaling of participation in cultural heritage and its co-creation. On the one hand, the Convention assumes that actions at the micro-level are incentivised or legitimised, when already present, underlining the fact that heritage should become a tool for local democracy. On the other, the Convention asks the signatory parties to define policies that are enforced by the traditional policy system, experts, local institutions and
national authorities through participatory management tools and shared cultural policy governance. As Krauss (2008) pinpointed with reference to a case dealing with another Council of Europe Convention, the European Landscape Convention, discourses around heritage that have long become global (as expressed by the flourishing of charters) ‘rubs together’ with many contradictions in light of local practice. The local and the global, the principles and the practices, are entangled through a variety of ‘frictional encounters’, using the metaphor in the path opened by Tsing (2005).

In the following paragraph I will focus on narratives through which people that have collaborated in ATRIUM in Forlì articulate their subjective understanding of local participation and cultural heritage pushing the principles of the Convention to ‘travel around’. This movement generated frictions, which I looked at in Forlì between 2016 and 2018.

This research mainly uses qualitative methodologies, particularly in-depth interviews and participant observations. In this paper, I use only a portion of the material collected to uncover the personal narratives through which people involved in the ATRIUM project in a variety of roles articulate their understanding of local participation and heritage-making in the city they live and work in. When the Municipality of Forlì decided to engage in a participatory process, it first solicited specific actors to act as possible enablers of a wider ‘heritage community’. They included individuals and groups close to the cultural and the tourist sectors, given the cultural tourism ambition of ATRIUM. When the Faro Convention was introduced, a stronger involvement of civic networks and citizens was also pursued. I recorded 13 in-depth interviews, ranging in length from 40 minutes to 2 hours, with collaborators of ATRIUM that included Municipality representatives and citizens that have participated in diverse ATRIUM activities. Participant observation during public events and private meetings organised by the Municipality of Forlì, as well as a three-year long presence in the field, have presented a variety
of occasions to collect informal reflections from ATRIUM organisers, participants and visitors. Despite the interviewees being quite a homogeneous group, a variety of different positions have emerged. Some interviewees made explicit reference to frictions arising around ATRIUM and most, while consenting to be interviewed, explicitly asked for anonymity. For this reason, in the following paragraphs, I have omitted any specific information that could identify the participants, and I refer to them with the simple identifiers of participant (Pp), proponent (Pr) or external expert (Exp) which reflect their role as collaborators in the Faro process in Forlì.

**Making Heritage More Participatory: Arising Frictions**

The Council of Europe’s framework *Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society*, is an international (namely, European) charter that can be conceived as containing ‘universal aspirations’ around heritage co-creation from a more democratic perspective. These ‘aspirations’ are shared by the various collaborators around the ATRIUM project, but they are also re-shaped with different nuances. Frictions emerge as the Faro Convention principles travel through differing scales and as they are implemented at the local scale. Frictions can arise from practical, affective and emotional contestations; adding an additional layer to the realm of ‘frictional geographies’ (Ash et al., 2018). First, I will present the frictions relating to the proponents of ATRIUM’s wish to implement a more effective and democratic way of heritage-making. I will then identify the frictions that arose as the knowledge related to the Faro Convention moved through the multiplicity of scales and spaces that ATRIUM deals with. Last, I will focus on those frictions relating to ‘making’ heritage in a more participatory way through the inclusion of both formal and more performative practices.
Friction I: Top-Down / Bottom-Up

ATRIUM project proponents consider buildings that have been constructed during the Fascist era as part and parcel of the propaganda of the regime to be only a starting point in the process of self-enquiry among the citizens of Forlì. This process is, however, very problematic, since the traumatic past it represents is more of a collective taboo than a realm for collective debate (Malone, 2017). As one participant says, ATRIUM relates with something that ‘is anyway a part of a very delicate part of our history’ (#1Pp). This is a collective story that nobody likes to talk about; therefore the ‘top-down’ choice of the municipality to enable a heritage-making process moving from what directly points to it (the architecture) was initially anathema. Another participant added that the whole project was, for her, ‘difficult … there are a variety of barriers linked to the use of sites, of the meaning that those buildings have had. There are a lot of reasons why ATRIUM is difficult to understand – or better to accept – as a tool’ (#2Pp).

The buildings that the project is focusing on are today being used for ordinary, everyday activities in the city such as schooling, housing or public services. It is not easy for Forlì’s inhabitants to turn the sites of their daily practice into sites of a memory that is so ‘dissonant’ (Battilani et al., 2018; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). However, ‘I cannot but see the potential [of ATRIUM], and I am very happy that it exists’ (#2Pp) the same person continues; this sentiment is echoed by #1Pp who admits that her perception of these buildings has shifted since she has been engaged in ATRIUM: ‘Me and my colleague, who was born here … we have always considered those buildings to form the ugly side of Forlì. Working on the project … working from within it I have discovered how much that stuff fascinates me’. The fact that ATRIUM is driven by the Municipality of Forlì within the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme, which brings with it an educational intent, has not gone unnoticed; this
intent is part and parcel of most heritage-making programmes connected with national and international cultural policy (Smith, 2006): ‘What we do with ATRIUM is that we are trying to (sighs) I don’t know ... it is as if [we are bringing] self-consciousness into the public space ... forcing a community to interrogate themselves on a lapse of uncomfortable history and ask “how did it happen that we became Fascists? How does it happen that we have that story behind us?”’ (#3Pr).

The adoption of the Faro Convention shall have served the need to incorporate greater local participation in conservation and heritage management without compromising participation; a limit of many charters that, despite their claim for more participation, do not allow for the alteration of the hierarchy among experts and others’ profile in establishing the value and meanings embedded in the fabric of a place (see also Waterton et al., 2006). This awareness is present in the words of a proponent: ‘All that we do with Faro must (...) help us to build a maximum involvement of residents in ATRIUM; each of them shall pose themselves some questions, be they organised in groups, in their neighbourhood, in civic networks, however they want’ (#3Pr).

This objective is proving difficult and ‘frictional’. The first target of the repositioning is that Faro includes the proponent institutions. Recognising citizens’ right to select and perform cultural heritage the way they want means giving a voice to a wider arena than generally conceived in the legal framework of policy-making around heritage. Looking at the Faro Convention has helped ATRIUM proponents understand that, ‘It is not only the heritage authority that can set the value of a cultural good, or the Municipality that decides what to (do) ... there are residents for whom certain things are important, and they are important starting from what is important to them.’ (#3Pr).
Articulations of ‘heritage from below’ (Robertson, 2012) may or may not represent spaces of ‘marginalized memory’ (Cresswell, 2012b), but they represent a way to build connections through narratives that reflect residents’ desire to represent their histories and to tell everyday stories about their communities. This seems to have been assumed by ATRIUM proponents: ‘the neighbourhood civic network organising an exhibition on their area, a group of elders gathering to sing fighting songs [canti di lotta] (...) what is changing is that we acknowledge that what they are doing is not just a way to gather together, [a way ] of socialising, but it is a way to face the relationship with the heritage of the city, with the story of the city’ (#3Pr). Following Beel & Wallace (2018), we could say that ‘it is the political motivation to express an historical narrative collectively that reflects the interests of a particular place’ (p. 9) that has been recognised.

However, while open to accepting vernacular ways of heritage-making, an authorised heritage discourse is emerging in Forlì. For instance, one of the proponents of ATRIUM claims that, so far, ‘[an ATRIUM] narrative as we would like to have it, hasn’t come out yet, there is no doubt (...) the tourist guides have a language and a forma mentis that is not the one we would like’ (#3Pr). Indeed, in Forlì, the situation is complicated by the rising nationalistic and populist climate in Italy in which Fascism is the object of an a-critical de-sanction; a policy that ATRIUM and its proponents firmly reject. One Council of Europe external expert commented that ‘ATRIUM involvement of civil society in Forlì … I think they [the proponents] are in the situation of not knowing what to do, how to manage this case and since they are afraid [of allowing narratives that might run for a de-sanctioning of Fascism] they control a lot to whom they give voice. In reality, in Forlì we are in the realm of co-optation’ (#7Exp). Another participant (#1Pp) adds to this point: ‘The municipality has not decided that for them a bottom-up project is important (...). Interviewer: But actually, it is what they wanted to do...
Interviewee: No, they have never done it! They have never worked directly with citizens. To me, if you want a bottom-up project ... go there, ring the doorbells’. ‘Going there and ringing the doorbells’ will open up a variety of frictions – from the cost it entails and the memories of the past one could find beyond those doors – that the proponents of ATRIUM may not want to deal with.

**Friction II: Across Scales and Spaces**

The second friction I will portray concerns the various scales that ATRIUM addresses. The *Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society*, as well as the programme of the Cultural Routes, is a product of the Council of Europe, and is specifically committed to local democracy and cultural participation (Fairclough, Šešić, Mijatović, Auclair, & Soini, 2015). The political aims beyond heritage-making have, therefore, been re-discussed through this charter so there is lesser focus on national values and interests and more focus on the supra-national entity – Europe – which is currently struggling to maintain its political project alive, particularly in terms of a collective identity and the respect of Human Rights within its member countries. Despite having stimulated a great deal of debate among cultural policy bureaucrats in a variety of countries, the Faro Convention does not seem to have been effective in stabilising the cultural Europeanisation project; in fact, by 2011 it had been ratified by only 10 out of the 47 countries adhering to the Council of Europe. By the end of 2018, only 18 had ratified it.⁹

The *Consulta della Cultura* [Culture Committee] in Forli was inspired by the Faro Convention. The link between the Consulta and Faro principles is however ‘frictional’: ‘your interlocutors shall understand what you are saying... and the Consulta is an action from the top-down, not a committee that has its origin in the grassroots’, as #8Pr is well aware. This is one of the few
actions that the Municipality can undertake, considering that the Faro Convention has, so far, not been ratified by the Italian Government and that putting the Convention in action would require action by more than a single municipality.

What the municipality can do, and what has been done in Forlì, is to support and foster heritage communities within the city. This process is long, and frictional, but is, somehow, happening. As one of the participants put it: ‘personally I see it [working on ATRIUM] as a social engagement towards my city, towards my epoch. It is my “political” contribution, because it is politics, with my means, with my way of being, in order to give voice to the architecture where I was born and in which I live and with which I necessarily have to find a way to relate. If I pose these questions, everyone might pose them too. We have to understand how many people, like me, say, “yes, we can contribute”’ (#9Pp). But many are also aware of limits to this process of community building and local participation. One is the risk of ATRIUM falling in a ‘local’ (space-bounded) and ‘temporal’ (bounded to the Fascist era or to the 20th Century) trap and not being able to upscale and update the critique to totalitarianisms: ‘I will give you an example: in this experience, peace facilitators have never been invited, those who work on the front lines [today], such as Emergency, for instance...’ (#9Pp).

Enabling a process of community building and citizenship empowerment ‘rubs together’ with scalar and temporal constraints connected with the Faro Convention, so that, at some point, ATRIUM managers in Forlì started to have doubts about using it. ‘Ok, [the Faro Convention] is signed by [national] governments. And then? What does it mean that [national] governments ratify it? So what? There exist only very small Faro experiences, all over Europe there will be 4 or 5 and all of them are microscopic’ (#3Pr). Among these very small Faro experiences, the Hotel du Nord, in Marseille – a cooperatively owned hospitality network that has helped recognise that migrants’ neighbourhoods had their own heritage and their own right to assess it
– and the Venice Heritage Community – a residents’ network fighting against the total touristification of the city – stand out. These have served as benchmarks and what has been done there, was reviewed throughout by the ATRIUM collaborators.

However, ‘travelling references’ have raised frictions in Forlì. On one side, some participants have been raising doubts around the need to introduce Faro in Forlì; these doubts arising mainly from potential for comparison. One participant claimed that she had lived the introduction of Faro as a sort of betrayal towards the Forlivesi: ‘It is as when in children’s toys you try to fit the round-shape object in the square-shaped hole: Faro in Marseille is beautiful, but it has nothing to do with Forlì’ (#2Pp). This relates to three elements stressed by other participants. The first is the one touched upon above: not perceiving that Forlì has societal problems linked with, for instance, migration or (failed) intercultural dialogue. The second concerns the fact that heritage connected with the Fascist era is generally not perceived as dissonant in town, simply because there is a strong shared agreement that it relates to ‘a bad thing’, especially among those taking part in ATRIUM-supported activities. Following Cresswell (2014a), friction can be both a symptom of mobile contestation and something that is itself contested, as is shown in the third element related to the Faro-related ‘travelling knowledge’ that is more strictly connected with the relationship between the city and tourism: ‘On one side, Venetians have the necessity of re-appropriating their public space, because they are “eaten up” [by tourism]. Their history is going to be eaten, digested, and vomited on them; but, if you tell me about the general population of Forlì, how can the heritage framed by ATRIUM be considered dissonant?’ (#4Pp). Forlì is not perceived as a city suffering the negative consequences of overtourism, and neither is this perceived as a risk that might be real in the future.

_Friction III: Formal/Performative_
The last friction I will portray concerns the ‘range of chemical, affective, sensory, motor and memory forces that compete with one another and contribute to how a person thinks, feels and ultimately decides how to act in a situation’ (Ash et al., 2018, p. 1142). This friction arises from the clash between formal and performative or ‘more-than-representational’ (Waterton, 2014) ways to enact heritage-making.

Normative and authorised ways of conceiving cultural heritage persist in Forlì, despite the shift in the mindset of those who manage the ATRIUM project. ATRIUM has influenced the cultural policy-making of Forlì, channelling the action of a series of formal events, such as the local Festival del ‘900 [20th Century festival]. It is not just a matter of theme; it is also the participatory and inclusivist approach to cultural heritage that the project has adopted since the very beginning, even before being inspired by the Faro Convention, which also includes communicating heritage through performative and sensorial experiences. On the occasion of the presentation of ATRIUM in front of the Council of Europe representatives in 2014, the Municipality asked a local group specialised in community development through arts-based methodologies to organise an event. The person in charge recalls that, initially, they were just asked to animate the afternoon and were not given a more specific remit. Eventually they produced Piccola Storia del Controllo dell’Uomo sull’Uomo [A Little Story of Man’s Control over Man] or, in the creators’ own description, ‘an interactive performance on architecture as arts used as a tool to interact with the posture of a human collective’12. It consisted of a collective walk through the ATRIUM buildings accompanied by, not only narratives from the organisers, but also an active recording of sounds from the past, the embodiment of postures connected with models of military education during Fascism and, also, a playful activity with wooden pieces to be used to build small buildings. Embracing the complexity of heritage in
these performative ways connects to the recent discussion of heritage-making as it emerges on the ground of non-representational geographies (see Jones et al. 2012) taking into account more-than-representational dynamics (Waterton et al., 2015; Waterton 2014). As Waterton (2014) suggests, these approaches open up thinking about heritage as a way ‘that foregrounds explorations of feeling, emotion and affect and places emphasis on how these are negotiated and experienced through a recentred imagining of the body’ (p. 824).

A more-than-representational framework to heritage-making is not only a human geographic perspective but, even more, an innovative technique used in the cultural-creative sectors to engage with audiences through performative approaches. The two sides concur to establish the fields of creative methodologies in the social sciences that include ways of going beyond representational accounts of phenomena (and more specifically of place) and to engage in co-creative research (Dowling, Lloyd, & Suchet-Pearson, 2018). In the case of ATRIUM, the performative approach presented above was later merged with the idea of ‘heritage walks’ suggested by the early experiences of application of the Faro Convention. Heritage walks are not just sightseeing accompanied by a narrative presented in a patronising voice; rather, they are more similar to transect walks merged with a multisensorial and multivocal exploration of place, as required by the motto of ‘Peoples, Places and Stories’ (CoE, 2018).

Following the adoption of the Faro Convention, a set of more-than-representational experiences were solicited in Forlì by ATRIUM. Some experiences used food or music as tools to perform the problematic theme posed by ATRIUM, for instance to deconstruct the propagandistic use of the agro-food sector during the Fascist regime through a sensorial path based on smelling, tasting, and listening to music. However, these performances were sometimes misunderstood by audiences, as one organiser recalls: ‘We entered in a moment with the music ... and I said “close your eyes and imagine” ... and people did not understand. So, we had enthusiastic
people and other people whose reaction was, “Oh, my God, what’s that?” As if to say, “Why should I do that?”’ (#9P).

Patronising and more equal, as well as formal or performative ways of heritage-making are entangled in a frictional way. Frictions emerge from the practices enacted by proponents, but also from the audiences. Not everybody is at ease entering the affective context of heritage. These frictions are reinforced by the specific kind of heritage that ATRIUM portrays. On one occasion in 2016, a group of international tourism studies scholars were invited to take part in the Piccola Storia del Controllo dell’Uomo sull’Uomo described above. Their emotional reaction was very strong, with some feeling very bad or even insulted to be asked to experience the physical constraints of military education. Frictions are productive as long as they produce a transition or change in state (Ash et al. 2018). In the case portrayed, this led to some people rejecting the performance, others – particularly those who were coming from countries that had experienced dictatorships – where thankful to the organiser for having found such a sensorial way to communicate dissonance.

Conclusion

So far, there has been very little analysis of what happens once democratic principles of inclusion, local participation and heritage-making are performed on the ground of everyday urban experiences, despite the debates on this issue in the last decade (Harvey 2015, Waterton et al. 2006). To fill this gap, I have used a ‘frictional’ approach that merges globalisation, mobility and affective turns in social and cultural geographies. I have used this approach to analyse how ‘travelling knowledge’ around an international charter such as the framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society proposed by the Council of Europe.
is enacted through a set of frictions. These enable a long unstable, creative but, also, unequal process that exceeds formal methods which are adopted in participatory methodologies connected with heritage management (that were analysed in the study of Battilani et al., 2018). Repositioning heritage, and heritage-making, often means merging formal, vertical, and authorised ways of framing heritage with more undefined, open-ended, fluid ways of doing so. But, it is not sufficient to state that citizens have the right to claim what heritage is to them to enact this shift. The specificity of the ATRIUM project – which explicitly addresses the legacy of a problematic past, namely of totalitarian regimes – makes this shift even more frictional; a ‘frictionality’ that is evident even among those who collaborated in the introduction of the Faro Convention principles in Forlì in 2016.

One may question whether a tool that represents an inclusivist approach around a specific heritage is an appropriate tool to use in the representation of controversial versions of the past, as in the case of Fascism in Italy. A more open-ended acceptance of heritage includes questioning the perception of dissonance, which some collaborators of the project reject. The denial of friction around this specific heritage is the first friction that the attempt to pursue the principles of the Faro Convention has made explicit. In a way, the will of ATRIUM proponents to open up to a more inclusive way to conceive heritage, highlights a variety of ideologies in the same project. On the one hand, one finds the refusal of some collaborators to reflect upon their traumatic past and, on the other, lies the framing of proponents on how ATRIUM performances should be enacted.

Another frictional issue concerns the more-than-representational ways of enacting local participation through heritage (Waterton, 2014), which could be effective, but which could also lead to more exclusion than involvement. There is an increasing common belief that performative ways and creative methodologies are more inclusive (Dowling et al., 2018), but
this is not always the case. As shown, the frictions that practical, affective and emotional methodologies towards heritage-making can generate can enable heritage-making, but can also interrupt this process. Regarding this, Ash et al. (2018) suggest that ‘friction can be productively introduced to help achieve the completion of a task, as long as this friction is carefully managed’ (p. 1139), possibly something that did not happen in Forlì.

A ‘frictional geography’ approach might be useful to explore other place-making processes, such as, touristification, place-branding or urban regeneration. Not only because they overlap, as one often nurtures the other, but also because the right of citizens to participate in these processes is increasingly heralded, while, in parallel, touristification, place-branding and urban regeneration are increasingly open to societal conflict (see, for instance, Vanolo (2017) with reference to place branding). Untangling the contradictions of a variety of place-making forms (which may include also human-non-human relations) can help clarify how diverse acceptances of specific ideas coexist and ‘rub’ against one another and, in so doing, enact space and place dynamics. Just as the friction metaphor has started to insinuate itself as part of an emergent vocabulary in geographical reflections (see Anderson, 2017, 2019a, 2019b), it could be perhaps claimed that the approach proposed could prove useful in understanding the difficult situation local democracy in western societies finds itself in, on the one hand searching for new ways to express itself and, on the other, failing to embrace diversity and conflict.

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3 The coalition in charge of city administration – supporting the project here described – changed following the municipal election of June 2019, while this paper was being revised.

4 With a shift in the meaning of the acronym to *Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the XX Century in Europe’s Urban Memory*.

5 The programme, launched in 1987, provides Member States of the Council of Europe with a framework to focus on the diverse heritage of Europe and encourage cultural cooperation by developing projects involving different political-administrative levels, from the local to the
national and the European level. It is a European programme that aims to stimulate citizenship and democracy in culture and landscape policies and involve local people in all the steps of the creation of the routes. It has more recently added cultural tourism as a tool to reach the programme aims (Institut européen des itinéraires culturels, 2015).

6 Available at: http://www.atriumroute.eu/about-us/atrium-association (Last access 17/10/2019).


8 It shall be acknowledged that as ATRIUM was first proposed at the beginning of the 2010s, a variety of antifascist organisations, networks and movement expressed their concern towards the possibility that the project may become a tool for a soft and ‘pop’ revision of Fascism (see Saporetti, 2013). ATRIUM proponents have therefore tried to avoid such a distortion by paying careful attention to the initiatives they have fostered ever since.

9 As of 17/10/2019.

10 The Italian Senate has approved the first step towards ratification on Oct. 10, 2019, while this paper was being revised. The next step will consist on the approval from the Chamber of Deputies.

11 Emergency is an independent and neutral Italian NGO that provides free medical treatment to the victims of wars, anti-personnel mines and poverty. Emergency also promotes a culture of peace, solidarity and respect for human rights.

12 https://youtu.be/XaAToK9zT44 (Last access 17/10/2019).