The Role of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Climate Governance: Policy Frameworks and Political Discourse in Greece

Athina Fatsea,
PhD C., DFLTI, UNESCO Chair on Threats to Cultural Heritage, Ionian University
Research Assistant & Project Manager, ELIAMEP

Abstract

Intangible cultural heritage is linked to climate change in various ways; firstly, it is per se threatened by the impacts of climate change and needs protection; secondly, it can contribute to the mitigation and adaptation to the effects of climate change. Despite the growing global acknowledgment of the cultural dimensions of climate change (e.g., see Paris Agreement: 2015, art. 7.5), the specific role of intangible cultural heritage remains underexplored in climate policymaking at national and international levels. This study examines how intangible cultural heritage is framed within Greek climate change policies, analyzing the extent to which it is integrated into national climate action plans, political discourse, and international commitments.

Employing a qualitative research approach, this study conducts political discourse analysis on a selection of policy documents, legislative texts, ministerial statements, and international agreements as well as relevant advocacy and NGO reports. The analysis focuses on the thematic framing of intangible cultural heritage, its perceived role in climate adaptation and mitigation, and the degree to which political actors prioritize it within broader environmental strategies. Preliminary findings indicate that, while Greece acknowledges cultural heritage in recent climate-related policies, explicit references to intangible cultural heritage remain limited, fragmented, and largely reactive —focused on loss and damage rather than proactive integration into resilience strategies. Political discourse tends to emphasize tangible heritage (Carducci: 2014, p. 131), such as archaeological sites, whereas intangible cultural heritage —despite its potential contribution to sustainable practices and community adaptation— is rarely integrated into climate policies.

By identifying policy gaps and discursive trends, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the intersection between intangible cultural heritage and climate change governance in Greece, and offers insights applicable to broader international contexts. The findings highlight policy implications for integrating intangible cultural heritage into national climate strategies and fostering a more holistic approach to sustainability that includes cultural knowledge systems, traditional environmental practices, and local community engagement.

Keywords

Intangible cultural heritage, climate change, policy frameworks

Introduction

As Chainoglou and Katsios (2024, p. 144) point out, cultural heritage (tangible, intangible and natural) is a non-renewable resource for now living and future generations. They categorize threats to cultural heritage according to the context of their materialization. This plethora of threats can range from environmental, to economical, technological, or even political threats, with impacts on both the tangible and intangible dimensions of cultural heritage as well as on the socio-economic security of the individuals and the communities concerned. Among them, environmental threats emerge as an urgent challenge, increasingly intensified by climate change and its effects on ecosystems, livelihoods, and cultural continuity. In this context, intangible cultural heritage is inherently fragile, as it lacks fixed and permanent attributes that remain constant over time. Instead, it is closely linked to the community and the individuals who preserve, adapt, and pass it down through generations. (Carducci: 2014, p. 131).

Intangible cultural heritage is connected to climate change in various ways; firstly, it is per se menaced by the impacts of climate crisis and needs protection; secondly, intangible cultural heritage can contribute to the prevention, mitigation and adaptation to the climate change effects, if integrated into science-based climate impact and adaptation strategies. More specifically, communities have developed over centuries traditional knowledge about the availability of natural resources and threats to their livelihood. This knowledge has been passed down from generation to generation, through practice, and various traditional rituals and cultural expressions such as music, theater and festivities. In order to adapt to climate variability and change, local communities observe plant and animal behaviors to anticipate weather changes and prepare appropriately. They also use tools of cosmology, such as observing the constellations, the phases of the moon, and the direction of the wind. Forecasting the weather and assessing available resources is particularly important for planning and decision-making purposes. After all, the sustainable practices of using natural resources prevent the loss of biodiversity, support the development of the natural environment, and strengthen the effort as well to manage climate change (Zervaki: 2018, p. 189).

The 1960s saw the first attempt at coordinated action by the international community to preserve cultural heritage that was threatened by human activity or natural causes. In 1960, in Egypt, monuments of the Nubian civilization were relocated from the area that would be flooded due to the construction of the Aswan High Dam. Then, in 1966, there was intense international mobilization after torrential rain caused the devastating floods that largely affected the monuments and works of art of the historic cities of Florence and Venice (Zervaki: 2016, p. 174). These cases have highlighted the need to protect cultural heritage in times of peace, both from human interventions and from extreme weather events caused by climate change. In recent decades, efforts have been increasingly focused on the protection of cultural heritage in general, and its intangible manifestations in particular, the protection of which from modern threats has until recently been largely neglected (Maus: 2014, p. 702).

The climate change-cultural heritage nexus has surfaced prominently in political discourse, where language not only reflects but also constructs social and environmental policy priorities. Despite the growing global acknowledgment of the cultural dimensions of climate change, the specific role of intangible cultural heritage remains underexplored in climate policymaking at national and international levels. In

the Greek context, a country with rich cultural traditions and acute climate vulnerabilities, the discursive framing of intangible cultural heritage in political and institutional language can offer crucial insights into national and international governance ideologies.

This study investigates how intangible cultural heritage is positioned within the broader climate policy framework, with a particular focus on Greece. It explores the degree to which intangible cultural heritage is integrated into national climate action plans, political discourse, and international commitments, and how this reflects evolving climate governance priorities. To address this, the research adopts a qualitative approach, employing political discourse analysis to examine a curated selection of texts. These include policy documents, legislative frameworks, ministerial statements, parliamentary debates, international agreements, and advocacy reports produced by NGOs and civil society actors working at the intersection of climate change and cultural heritage. This comprehensive and diachronic selection enables the study to identify ideological shifts, changing priorities, and emerging trends in how intangible cultural heritage is conceptualized within climate narratives.

Methodology and Corpus Selection

The analysis focuses on the discursive strategies used to frame the climate–intangible cultural heritage relationship, both in the Greek national context and across European and international governance levels. This study is guided by the following research question: How has the relationship between intangible cultural heritage and climate policy evolved across international, European, and Greek governance frameworks between 1992 and 2024, and what discursive shifts reflect this integration?

This study employs a qualitative research design, applying political discourse analysis to examine how intangible cultural heritage is framed within climate-related political discourse across different levels of governance. Political discourse analysis is particularly suited to this study, as it enables the interpretation of language not merely as communication but as a social and ideological practice that shapes policy narratives, power relations, and governance agendas (Fairclough, 1995; Wodak & Meyer, 2001). Through this lens, the study investigates how meanings surrounding intangible cultural heritage and climate change are constructed, negotiated, and institutionalized in key political texts.

The corpus spans the period 1992–2024 and encompasses major climate treaties, EU initiatives, Greek national legislation, political speeches, and NGO surveys. These were selected from three governance levels [international, European, and national (Greece)] to allow for a multilevel comparative analysis.

A series of inclusion criteria guided the selection:

1. Institutional origin: UN, EU, Greek government, or internationally recognized NGOs.
2. Relevance: Environmental-related document with explicit reference to intangible cultural heritage.

3. Genre: Policy documents, political speeches, legal frameworks, or advocacy reports.
4. Temporal scope: Documents published between 1992 and 2024, within the identified three key periods (see below).

Conversely, exclusion criteria involved:

1. Non-public or unofficial texts.
2. Documents focusing solely on tangible heritage without reference to intangible cultural heritage.
3. Documents without policy implications/suggestions.
4. Documents published before or after the designed periods.

Furthermore, the analysis follows a two-stage structure:

A. Diachronic Segmentation

The corpus was divided into three historical periods, designed around major policy and discursive turning points at the international and national levels:

First period (1992–2004):

The first period (1992–2004) starts with the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (1992) and ends after the adoption of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) and before the adoption of culture-sensitive sustainability agendas. Cultural heritage, and particularly intangible cultural heritage, appears only in international climate discourse.

Second period (2005–2014):

The second period (2005–2014) is defined by two developments: the growing recognition of culture in sustainable development debates (notably following the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions) and the increased attention to adaptation strategies in climate policy frameworks.

Third period (2015–2024):

The third period (2015–2024) begins with the adoption of the Paris Agreement (2015), where cultural resilience started to be indirectly acknowledged, and extends to the present, a time when climate policies are increasingly incorporating references to cultural heritage in general.

B. Governance-Level Comparison

The second scale of the analysis is based on the examination of different levels of governance —international, European, and national. This multilevel approach allows overarching trends and divergences in policy preferences to be identified, providing insight into how discourses on intangible cultural heritage and climate change evolve and interact across scales. The data was interpreted through framing analysis, identifying how intangible cultural heritage is constructed within climate discourse — as a threatened object, a resource for resilience, or a symbol of identity.

For the identification of international policy documents and soft law instruments, official repositories such as the United Nations Digital Library, UNFCCC documents

portal, and online archives were systematically searched. The search included terms such as intangible cultural heritage, traditional practices/knowledge, and climate change, and was restricted to the period 1992–2024 to ensure consistency with the overall temporal framework. Accordingly, for the selection of EU policy documents, the EUR-Lex database was used, employing its advanced search functionalities to identify legally binding texts, communications, and strategic reports that reference intangible cultural heritage or related terms. The search was filtered by date (1992–2024), document type, and relevant policy areas (environment, culture, climate action). Finally, Greek texts were sourced through the National Printing House (Ethniko Typografeio), the official websites of the Hellenic Parliament, the Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy, and the Hellenic Ministry of Climate Crisis. Key documents were selected using again keyword-based searches and filtered by relevance, institutional origin, and time frame (1992–2024).

To identify patterns and shifts over time, the analysis includes a quantitative coding and mapping phase. This involved manually coding key references, frames, and actors across the corpus. Texts were analyzed with the aim to organize excerpts, assign codes related to the framing of intangible cultural heritage and climate change (e.g., "intangible cultural heritage as tool for building resilience", "climate change as a threat to cultural heritage" etc.), and map trends across time and governance levels. The corpus of the study includes a variety of text types: international treaties and declarations (e.g., UNFCCC, Paris Agreement), European Union strategic documents (e.g., European Green Deal, European Climate Law), national legislation (e.g., Greek National Climate Law No. 4936/2022), official speeches by political leaders, and reports by NGOs (e.g., ICOMOS, IPCC, Europa Nostra). These texts were selected based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria described above, ensuring their authority, representativeness, and relevance in setting, influencing, or reflecting policy directions.

Limitations of the Study

Like all studies, our research also has limitations, which present opportunities for future investigations. First, the scope is intentionally limited to climate-related policymaking, rather than encompassing both cultural and environmental policy domains. This decision was made to maintain methodological clarity and analytical depth, though it inevitably excludes potentially relevant developments within cultural heritage institutions that do not intersect with climate frameworks. While effort has been made to approach the discourse analytically and systematically, the selection of sources, framing categories, and interpretation of patterns is shaped by an interdisciplinary lens that privileges the intersection between cultural heritage and environmental governance. Furthermore, this study is limited to publicly available textual data and does not include interviews or fieldwork, which could enrich the analysis with practitioner insights. The focus on Greece as a national case study also means that some region-specific dynamics may not be generalizable, although comparative insights with EU and UN frameworks aim to provide broader relevance. Future research could expand this approach through triangulation with ethnographic data or participatory methods involving local communities and policymakers.

Salience Across Governance Levels and Key Actors

International level — United Nations

In the first period (1992–2004), foundational texts such as the UNFCCC (1992) and Kyoto Protocol (1997) made no mention of cultural heritage or traditional practices, with discourse centered on emissions, scientific consensus, and state accountability. However, other relevant conventions mention intangible cultural heritage. For instance, the text of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) highlights the need to "respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge" [art. 8(j)]. Then, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (UNCCD) of 1994 refers to the importance of utilizing "traditional and local knowledge, know-how and practices, ensuring […] that the owners of that knowledge will directly benefit on an equitable basis and on mutually agreed terms" [art. 17(c)].

The second period (2005–2014) introduced indirect cultural references through the growing recognition of indigenous knowledge in climate negotiations and the activities of bodies like the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Documents from the Conferences of the Parties (COPs) of the UNFCCC, though not legally binding, incorporate references to the intangible cultural heritage in their decisions. For example, the UNFCCC COP13 Bali Action Plan (2008) does not mention intangible cultural heritage, but recognizes that the needs of local and indigenous communities should be addressed when action is taken to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries. UNFCCC COP16 Cancun Agreements (2010) specifically calls for the use of traditional and indigenous knowledge in adaptation.

Integration and policy formalization occurred to an extent in the 2015–2024 period, where documents such as the Paris Agreement (2015) include references to traditional knowledge systems (Article 7.5), and where organizations like UNESCO, ICOMOS, and IPCC published influential reports (e.g., Future of Our Pasts, 2019; Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage, 2023). These texts mark a paradigmatic shift from fragmented treatment of culture in climate governance to a more systematic inclusion of intangible cultural heritage as a knowledge system, adaptation tool, and value framework. More specifically, the Paris Agreement addresses the issue of taking action to adapt to climate change, by improving adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to the impacts of climate change (Doussis: 2018, p. 179). In this context, it recognizes the importance of the knowledge and practices of local communities and indigenous people in the process of adapting to climate change [art. 7(5)]. However, given the great importance given to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, aspects of cultural heritage that are less useful for the purposes of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, such as traditional cultural expressions, are not considered in the climate change policy-making process (Kim: 2011, p. 268).

European Level — European Union

At the EU level, the integration of intangible cultural heritage into climate-related policy and discourse evolves significantly across the three identified periods. During the first period (1992–2004), EU climate policies focused predominantly on emissions reduction (e.g., the EU Emissions Trading System), economic instruments, and compliance with the Kyoto Protocol. Cultural heritage, particularly intangible aspects, was entirely absent from this early climate legislation. In the second period (2005–2014), EU climate adaptation gained policy prominence (e.g., Communication from the Commission "An EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change", 2013), but cultural heritage references remained limited and largely confined to tangible heritage dimension. During the third period (2015–2024), key policy documents by the EU institutions, such as the European Green Deal (European Commission, 2019) and the European Climate Law (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2021), set ambitious climate neutrality goals but do not stress the importance of local traditions and knowledge in green transition.

However, in other not legally binding documents (soft law), intangible cultural heritage enters EU-level climate frameworks more explicitly. For example, in 2019, the Council of the European Union issued a Resolution on the Cultural Dimension of Sustainable Development (2019/C 410/01), making specific reference to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005). At the EU level, there are also publications such as the "Strengthening Cultural Heritage Resilience for Climate Change" report (European Commission, 2022), or publications from the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), such as "Briefing on climate and culture" (2024).

National Level — Greece

In Greece, the evolution of policy attention to intangible cultural heritage in climate discourse mirrors the wider EU trend in the first years. During the first period (1992–2004), Greek climate strategies [e.g., National Programme for the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions (2000–2010) or Law No. 3017/2002 (Ratification of the Kyoto Protocol)] were mainly driven by EU and international obligations and lacked cultural dimensions altogether.

The second period (2005–2014) saw an increased interest in adaptation planning and biodiversity. However, intangible cultural heritage remained largely unaddressed in these frameworks, with policy emphasis placed primarily on ecosystems, landscapes, infrastructure, and compliance with EU environmental directives rather than community-based or heritage-informed adaptation strategies. By the end of this period, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2014) refers to cultural dimension of biodiversity as well as to the cultural value of Greek coasts, mentioning Greek landscapes "as components of national and European cultural and natural heritage". Notably, this document also mentions intangible cultural heritage, highlighting that the

trend of abandonment of traditional agricultural practices degrades both agro-ecosystems and the natural and semi-natural ecosystems of the surrounding landscapes.

During the third period (2015–2024) we notice the continuation of this shift. In 2021, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis's speech at COP26 stressed the vulnerability of Greece's natural heritage ("marine biodiversity", "mountains' natural habitat") to climate change effects. As he mentioned, in face of these challenges, Greece established a Climate Crisis Ministry. We notice here the use of the term "climate crisis" instead of "climate change", highlighting the urgent character of this phenomenon. During a high-level event of the Greek government, held in the context of COP26, Minister of Climate Crisis and Civil Protection, Christos Stylianides, mentioned accordingly the need to protect cultural heritage from the climate crisis and its effects. As he said, cultural and natural heritage is becoming increasingly vulnerable to the negative social and environmental impacts of climate change. In policymaking, the National Adaptation Strategy (2016) and National Climate Law No. 4936/2022 begin to gesture toward sustainability and cultural resilience. More specifically, in National Adaptation Strategy there is a specific section covering cultural heritage protection (4.14) as well as mentions to cultural heritage in other sections, such as cultural tourism (4.8). Greece also acknowledges cultural heritage in Greek National Climate Law No 4936/2022, with explicit references to the protection of cultural heritage and enhancement of the natural and cultural environment. Yet, there is no mention of intangible cultural heritage in both documents.

NGO Advocacy

Advocacy by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has gained considerable momentum in recent years, particularly in promoting the integration of intangible cultural heritage within climate governance frameworks. A key actor in this field is Europa Nostra, which has lately intensified its efforts. In collaboration with ICOMOS and the Climate Heritage Network, it published the European Cultural Heritage Green Paper in March 2021, which explicitly links cultural heritage with the goals of the European Green Deal. The paper calls for heritage to be recognized not only as a sector to be protected but also as an active contributor to climate action (Europa Nostra, 2021). Additionally, Europa Nostra has led calls to incorporate culture into UNFCCC frameworks, reflecting a growing recognition of intangible cultural heritage as a resource for climate resilience and community empowerment.

In the Greek context, recent years have seen a noteworthy surge in initiatives connecting intangible cultural heritage with environmental advocacy. NGOs, such as the Hellenic Society for the Environment and Cultural Heritage (ELLET) or the Mediterranean Institute for Nature and Anthropos (MedINA), have expanded their research programs to include a stronger emphasis on climate adaptation through heritage conservation. Apart from the advocacy part, MedINA has also implemented traditional practices to address the effects of climate change, such as restoring the micro-dams of Karavas in Kythera island to support freshwater management. The restoration of micro-dams, arched stone walls built vertically to the streamflow, is an example of "green infrastructure", inextricably linked to traditional water management techniques. These small barriers form a terraced riverbed, thereby reducing the slope and speed of the streamflow, while forming small pools of freshwater, which are made available for

farming, livestock, and wildlife. These stone micro-dams enrich the aquifer, as more water is infiltrated and stored in the underground layers. At the same time, they enhance the natural function of the ravine and eliminate the energy consumption that other water management systems require (MedINA, 2020).

These developments underscore how, particularly in the late years, NGOs have assumed an increasingly proactive role in advocating for the incorporation of intangible cultural heritage into climate governance (Escallón, 2019; Hołuj, 2024). Their work not only raises awareness but also provides actionable models for participatory, culturally-informed climate adaptation strategies, both at international and national levels. By collaborating with local communities and heritage bearers, these organizations help bridge the gap between high-level policy and ground-level implementation. Their contributions are especially crucial in contexts where formal climate frameworks lack explicit cultural components, offering alternative narratives and practical tools that integrate intangible cultural heritage into adaptation strategies.

Discourse Patterns Analysis

The political discourse across governance levels reveals three main evolving patterns regarding the relationship between climate change and intangible cultural heritage. These patterns can be analyzed through a critical lens, highlighting how political actors at international, European, and national levels have progressively redefined the role of cultural heritage within climate-related narratives. First of all, we notice the gradual but uneven integration of the cultural heritage dimension into climate policy, more evident at the international level, and then at the European and national levels. This trend reflects the influence of international environmental agreements and soft law instruments in shaping domestic priorities.

Over time, intangible cultural heritage has gained greater visibility within climate-related political discourse, with particular emphasis on the role of indigenous knowledge and traditional practices. These elements have emerged not only as culturally significant but also as strategically valuable for climate adaptation efforts. This shift reflects an evolving understanding of heritage, not only as something that must be preserved but also as a living body of knowledge that can actively contribute to resilience and sustainability goals.

This evolution in framing reflects broader ideological shifts, particularly in international climate governance, where adaptation strategies increasingly aim to be inclusive and culturally grounded. The growing presence of terms like “local knowledge systems”, “traditional ecological knowledge”, and “community-based adaptation” in official discourse highlights the repositioning of intangible cultural heritage from the periphery to a more central role within sustainability agendas. Using the coded data from the corpus, we can categorize the main framings of intangible cultural heritage in political discourse into three dominant types:

Frame Type	Description	Example Document
ICH as Symbol of Identity Worth Protecting	Heritage invoked as part of identity at risk from climate	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)
ICH as Threatened by Climate Change	Heritage framed as at risk from climate impacts	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2014)
ICH as Resource for Climate Adaptation	Traditional knowledge and practices framed as solutions for resilience	Paris Agreement (2015)

Table 1: Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) framing in political discourse.

These diachronic trends suggest that cultural heritage (and especially its intangible dimension) is increasingly politicized not only as something at risk but also as a potential contributor to adaptive capacity. This shift in discourse can be linked to broader developments in climate governance, particularly the increasing emphasis on locally-led adaptation, ecosystem-based approaches, and the integration of non-state actors in climate policy processes. From the above, it is clear that there is a lack in the institutional framework for climate change and its impacts as far as cultural heritage is concerned. Furthermore, the provisions of the treaties are quite general and their transformation into effective measures is up to the contracting parties (Lenzerini, 2014, p. 155). This implementation gap underscores the importance of political discourse in shaping both the visibility and the valuation of intangible cultural heritage in climate policy. The way political actors speak about cultural heritage influences which forms of knowledge are legitimized, preserved, or marginalized in governance frameworks.

Finally, the emerging role of non-state actors, including NGOs, introduces a complementary discourse that often challenges state-centric narratives. These organizations frame intangible cultural heritage as both intrinsically valuable and instrumental to sustainability. Their work, along with civil society reports and advocacy tools, helps to fill in the discursive and policy gaps left by formal institutions. In sum, the discourse on intangible cultural heritage within climate governance is neither static nor uniform. It reflects evolving power dynamics, shifting policy priorities, and differing levels of institutional responsiveness across governance levels.

Conclusions

An examination of the three periods reveals a growing salience of cultural heritage, both in terms of the frequency of references and the increasing specificity toward its intangible dimension. The political discourse analysis demonstrates a clear trajectory: from the initial exclusion of cultural considerations in climate policy to a growing (but still incomplete) recognition of intangible cultural heritage as both vulnerable and

valuable. The existing legal framework does not take account of the problem of the impacts of climate change on cultural heritage (Chechi: 2014). While international treaties have started to acknowledge indigenous and local knowledge in broad terms, there is still a need for concrete measures to include this dimension in climate change policymaking and disaster risk management strategies.

Greece emerges as an interesting case where historical identity, tourism, and disaster experiences converge to accelerate this integration. However, gaps remain, especially in operationalizing intangible cultural heritage safeguarding within climate adaptation strategies. While recent policy developments indicate a growing recognition of the relevance of cultural heritage, implementation remains fragmented and often symbolic rather than strategic. Addressing this requires clearer institutional mandates, cross-sectoral coordination, and sustained dialogue between heritage and environmental actors.

By identifying policy gaps and discursive trends, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the intersection between intangible cultural heritage and climate change governance, and offers insights applicable to broader international contexts. The findings highlight policy implications for integrating intangible cultural heritage into national climate strategies and fostering a more holistic approach to sustainability that includes cultural knowledge systems, traditional environmental practices, and local community engagement. Combining scientific data on climate change with traditional knowledge and practices of indigenous peoples can lead to the development of more effective, human-centered and environmentally sustainable policies for the mitigation of climate change effects and the adaptation to the new conditions. Modern tools could supplement traditional knowledge, which is constantly developed and adapted by its bearers. Therefore, synergies among cultural heritage actors, environmental actors as well as state actors should be established. Besides, it is up to the willingness and ability of the international community to take effective measures to address the threats that each manifestation of cultural heritage faces from this threat (Lenzerini: 2014, p. 142).

This study has demonstrated that the political discourse surrounding intangible cultural heritage and climate change, while historically fragmented, has significantly evolved in recent years. Through a political discourse analysis of international treaties, European frameworks, national legislation, and NGOs' reports, it becomes evident that intangible cultural heritage is increasingly recognized both as a cultural asset at risk and as a resource for climate adaptation. Particularly in the aftermath of major climate-related disasters, national governments like Greece have begun to explicitly include cultural heritage in climate laws, reflecting a broader shift in governance ideologies. At the same time, civil society actors, have been instrumental in advocating for heritage-sensitive climate policies. Despite progress, considerable gaps remain in how intangible cultural heritage is operationalized within climate governance. A sustained, multilevel commitment to integrating intangible cultural heritage into adaptation strategies is vital, not only to preserve heritage but to leverage it for building culturally-based resilience.

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