International Journal of Cultural Policy

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/gcul20

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To cite this article: Elżbieta Nakonieczna & Jakub Szczepański (2023): Authenticity of cultural heritage vis-à-vis heritage reproducibility and intangibility: from conservation philosophy to practice, International Journal of Cultural Policy, DOI: 10.1080/10286632.2023.2177642

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2023.2177642

Published online: 21 Mar 2023.

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CULTURAL POLICY
https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2023.2177642

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Authenticity of cultural heritage vis-à-vis heritage reproducibility and intangibility: from conservation philosophy to practice

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ABSTRACT

This article states that the philosophical nature/ambiguity/controversy of the issue of authenticity undermines its usefulness as a tool in conservation practice. The main drawback is the inability to objectively define the notion of authenticity. In conservation philosophy, the meaning of authenticity relativizes along with the widespread consent to the reproducibility of cultural heritage, whereas the recognition of its intangibility negates the sense of authenticity. In the World Heritage (WH) policy and practice, the uselessness/counterproductivity of authenticity as a necessary requirement is visible in the inconsistency of this system in the treatment of the commonly realized reproducibility of cultural heritage, and in relation to heritage with a prevailing intangibility, which is illustrated by the example of Gdańsk as a potential WH site. Although the article provides many arguments for departing from the concept of authenticity in the WH system, authenticity introduces the socially beneficial element of discretion (it cannot be considered binarily), as it forces a discussion that raises cultural awareness in an increasingly homogenized world. Finally, to reduce some inconsistencies in the WH system, this paper recommends restoring autonomy to criterion (vi) in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 14 April 2022
Accepted 3 February 2023

KEYWORDS
Authenticity; reproducibility; criterion (vi); intangibility; Gdańsk

Introduction

Authenticity appears to be a philosophical issue. Reisinger and Steiner argue that the myriad discussions of object authenticity mostly in tourism literature (grouped into three predominant ideologies: modernism/realism, constructivism, and postmodernism) indicate that 'the notion of authenticity is too unstable to claim the paradigmatic status of a concept' (Reisinger and Steiner 2006, 66). Reisinger and Steiner demonstrate that for modernists/realists, authenticity is objectively determined by experts according to certain standards, while constructivists 'characterize authenticity as a socially constructed interpretation of the genuineness of observable things' (69), and for postmodernists, authenticity is meaningless as 'they doubt any discernible, objective reality un[der]pins perceptions of authenticity' (66). Nevertheless, according to Reisinger and Steiner, there is an alternative positive way to appreciate the realness of objects which comes from the philosophy of Heidegger. For Heidegger, a concept is 'how humans understand themselves in relation to things,' as opposed to 'a representation of some "thing"' (74). Moreover, Heidegger 'advocates appreciating what appears' (78), for him 'things always are as they are' (76), and if he used a term like authentic, 'whatever appears would be authentic' (78).

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'[I]f the commitment is to discover some unified concept of object authenticity, then the research agenda must focus on a quest for common ground among the various ideologies that have a stake in defining and conceptualizing it' (81).

In the context of cultural heritage conservation, the notion of authenticity has been at the center of an intense debate and policy evolution following the discussions held in Bergen and Nara in 1994 (more about Nara's context in Gfeller 2017). Jokilehto (2019) argues that the concept of truth has always been a fundamental issue in philosophy, and the very word authenticity, of Greek origin (*authentikos* = authentic,) might have diverse connotations in different cultural contexts (e.g. it does not exist in Arabic and Japanese). Jokilehto cites Choay, who at the 1994 Nara Conference implied that if we wish to recognize the question of authenticity as universal, it needs to be seen in the context of philosophy, i.e. the search for meaning.

In heritage contexts, authenticity is generally considered a social construct with the emphasis on its relative/subjective/negotiable/polysemic character (Waitt 2000; Alberts and Hazen 2010; Vecco 2010; Kidd 2011; Nezhad, Eshrati, and Eshrati 2015; Brumann 2017; Boccardi 2019; Gao and Jones 2021). In critical heritage studies (CHS), in which 'heritage is, first and foremost, [perceived all along as] a process' (Harvey 2001, 335) – to be specific, 'as a cultural and social process,' by no means a 'thing' (Smith 2006, 2) – unlike the dominant Western perceptions of heritage, the attention was drawn 'to the issue of intangibility' (Smith 2006, 5), which 'challenged the emphasis placed on the idea of material authenticity' (Smith 2006, 5–6). Thus, the adoption of the 'heritage as a process' ideology, in a sense, forces the assessment of authenticity in the World Heritage (WH) context to even be completely abandoned (Khalaf 2021). For CHS scholars, the authenticity of heritage 'lies (. . .) in the meanings people construct for it in their daily lives' (Smith 2006, 6), or is just overlooked (Harvey 2001), presumably as a pointless concept while considering (cultural) heritage 'as the very manifestation of continuous change over time' (Holtorf 2020, 282). Interestingly, the latter assumption is somewhat in line with the aforementioned postmodern approach to authenticity in acknowledging a certain pointlessness of this issue. In summary, it appears that the counterproductivity of authenticity, as a concept, results from, for CHS scholars, the recognition of heritage as a process and its intangibility ('all heritage is intangible' [Smith 2006, 3]), and for postmodernists, the non-existence of objective reality underpinning the perception of authenticity.

In fact, contemporary culture faces the decline of strong references, which is representative of the period defined as 'an age of simulation' by postmodernist Baudrillard (2006) in 1981. As a retort, Baudrillard develops the concept of a simulacrum – a copy without an original – to address widespread reproduction and reproducibility in postmodern culture.

The phenomenon of 'heritage fabrication' was explicitly demonstrated by Lowenthal (1998), who stresses the fact that to preserve and reanimate our heritage, it is mandatory to reshape it through addition. Lowenthal considers such addition to heritage as its fabricating. In this paper, the term 'reproducibility,' or to be exact 'heritage reproducibility,' is derived from the word 'reproduction' in its broadest sense, which includes such physical and spiritual acts – within and beyond the scope of classical conservation philosophy and practice – as: anastylosis, restoration, reconstruction, restitution, rebuilding, re-creation, replication, copying, 'resurrection,' evocation, interpretation, etc. This term also includes Lowenthal's 'heritage fabricating.' Interestingly, with the exception of the *World Heritage Convention* (which is the founding text of the UNESCO WH system, in which the term 'reconstruction' and its 'equivalents' are not mentioned at all), the WH policy exclusively uses the term 'reconstruction.' Nevertheless, this article argues that, in general, many more interchangeable terms are used in conservation philosophy and practice.

This article argues that the philosophical nature and ambiguity of the issue of authenticity undermines its usefulness as a tool in conservation practice. The main drawback is the inability to objectively define the term authenticity. The article demonstrates that in conservation philosophy, the meaning of authenticity relativizes along with the widespread consent to the reproducibility of cultural heritage. In the WH practice, the counterproductivity of authenticity as a necessary requirement is visible in the inconsistency of this system in the treatment of the commonly realized

reproducibility of cultural heritage, and in relation to heritage with a prevailing intangibility, which is illustrated by the example of Gdańsk as a potential WH site.

Although the article provides many arguments for departing from the concept of authenticity in the WH system, authenticity introduces the socially beneficial element of discretion (authenticity cannot be considered binarily), as it forces a discussion that raises cultural awareness in an increasingly homogenized world. Finally, to reduce some inconsistencies in the WH system, this paper recommends restoring autonomy to criterion (vi) in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (OG).

A paradigm shift in the conservation philosophy in the late 20th century?

Authenticity appears to be the fundamental issue of conservation theory and doctrine (Nakonieczna 2017; Gao and Jones 2021). In *Teoria del restauro*, published in 1963, Brandi emphasized the significance of the conservation of historical and artistic authenticity (Jokilehto (1999 2008), 237). Brandi's (2005, 50) second principle of restoration was the following:

> restoration should aim to re-establish the potential oneness of the work of art, as long as this is possible without committing artistic or historical forgery, and without erasing every trace of the passage through time of the work of art.

Furthermore, Brandi stated that 'the re-establishment of the work's potential oneness should not be pushed so far as to destroy authenticity: that is, by superimposing a new, inauthentic but overpowering historical reality on the old' (66). Brandi's theory formed a reference for the *Venice Charter* of 1964 (Jokilehto [1999] 2008, 237), in which the desideratum about transmitting human values (as a common heritage) to future generations 'in the full richness of their authenticity'[1] was included. The idea of the *European Charter of the Architectural Heritage* of 1975 was similar: 'this heritage should be passed on to future generations in its authentic state and in all its variety as an essential part of the memory of the human race' (pt 2).

Nevertheless, in the 1970s and 1980s, the problem of authenticity 'tended to remain in the shadow of scientific development' (Jokilehto [1999] 2008, 296). It is only the message of the *Nara Document on Authenticity* of 1994 that can be regarded as a breakthrough. In accepting that 'it is (. . .) not possible to base judgements of values and authenticity within fixed criteria' and that 'the respect due to all cultures requires that heritage properties must be considered and judged within the cultural contexts to which they belong' (pt 11), the conservation assembly figuratively sanctioned a new approach to authenticity assessment (see also: Araoz 2011, 2013; Gfeller 2017; Boccardi 2019). Authenticity was seen as 'a notion related to the credibility and truthfulness of sources of information, which may include a great number of parameters depending on the character and values of the heritage concerned' (Jokilehto 2006, 2).

The *Riga Charter on Authenticity and Historical Reconstruction in Relationship to Cultural Heritage* of 2000 included, as a novelty, a not particularly helpful definition of authenticity that was previously used in the Nara Conference, but not included in the final document (Stovel 2008).

Finally, by the statement included in the *Yamato Declaration on Integrated Approaches for Safeguarding Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage* of 2004, that 'the term "authenticity" as applied to tangible cultural heritage is not relevant when identifying and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage' (pt 8), the applicability of the authenticity aspect in the safeguarding of cultural heritage was challenged. However, the *Warsaw Recommendation on Recovery and Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage* of 2018 refers to the *Nara Document* as a part of the OG, and in a conciliatory spirit determines that the 'assessment of authenticity should take account of the recognized values of the property (. . .), emphasizing both *material and other aspects*' (4, authors' emphasis).

Attitudes toward 'reproducibility' tend to correlate with the approach to authenticity (Nakonieczna 2017). Brandi's permission for the re-establishment of the work's potential oneness excluded any damage to its authenticity (Jokilehto [1999] 2008, 233). Brandi's (2005, 66) theory

a priori ruled out reconstruction, re-creation, and replication as interventions beyond the scope of proper restoration. The *Venice Charter* practically ignored the problem, most questionable in the post-war reality, of reconstructing monuments and historic sites that were reduced to rubble: 'all reconstruction work' merely concerning excavations was explicitly prohibited (article 15).

The first definition of the term 'reconstruction' in the conservation doctrine that appeared in the *Burra Charter* of 1979 was a watershed moment: 'reconstruction means returning a place as nearly as possible to a known earlier state and is distinguished by the introduction of materials (new or old) into the fabric' (article 1). The recognition of reconstruction as one of the permissible conservation processes was another novelty of the *Burra Charter*, but the reconstruction in question was not unconditioned. According to each version of the charter adopted from 1979 to 1999, reconstruction was appropriate only where the place was 'incomplete through damage or alteration' and it was justified by the existence of sufficient evidence to reproduce the earlier state of the fabric (Burra Charter 1979–1999). Furthermore, the reconstruction should be 'identifiable on close inspection' as being new work 'or through additional interpretation.' The latter consideration was appended during the document's revision of 1999.

The next step was to authorize permission for 'the reconstruction of very small parts having architectural significance' as an exception (based on precise and indisputable documentation) as well as reconstruction in toto in the given circumstances, as articulated in the *Cracow Charter* of 2000 (pt 4). Thereby 'reconstruction of an entire building, destroyed by armed conflict or natural disaster' was acceptable only if there were 'exceptional social or cultural motives' that were 'related to the identity of the entire community' (pt 4).

Nevertheless, according to the *Riga Charter* of 2000, the 'replication of cultural heritage is in general a misrepresentation of evidence of the past,' but '*in exceptional circumstances*, reconstruction of cultural heritage, lost through disaster, whether of natural or human origin, may be acceptable' (pts. 5–6, original emphasis). As per the *Riga Charter*, the 'reconstruction' of cultural heritage could mean the evocation, interpretation, restoration, or replication of its previous form.

In *Contemporary Theory of Conservation* published in 2005, Muñoz Viñas certified that contemporary ethics is flexible, and 'calling for what could be called "adaptive ethics"' (202). This flexibility of approach could justify 'the use of copies in some instances' (204).

The 2018 *Warsaw Recommendation*, which explicitly concerns the cultural heritage inscribed on the World Heritage List (WHL), essentially confirms the status quo regarding reconstruction (although it mentions the principle of 'build back better' which is in contradiction to classical reconstruction). The emphasis on combining materiality with the intangibility of cultural heritage in the process of reconstruction is a novelty. The document also recognizes the moral aspect of reconstruction (2).

Interestingly, the *Warsaw Recommendation* states that 'since the 1990s, there has been *a doctrinal shift towards intangible dimensions* as a result of the introduction of the concept of cultural landscapes and the 1994 *Nara Document on Authenticity*' (5, authors' emphasis). Subsequently, although the document itself is another new element of the conservation doctrine, instead of attempting to consolidate it, it only emphasizes that 'the emergence of these intangible associations needs to be consolidated within existing conservation doctrine' (5).

Developing the concept of outstanding universal value and authenticity (UNESCO)

The concept of outstanding universal value is 'an idea rooted in the search for elements that link us together as human beings' (Cameron 2009, 127). According to the UNESCO 1972 *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, 'outstanding universal value' (OUV) is the threshold for including a property in the WHL. Although the *World Heritage Convention* is regarded as 'one of the most widely recognized and effective conservation instrument[s] dedicated to the protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage' (135) and the term OUV was used

thirteen times in its English text, its working definition was never included in it. Therefore, it was the World Heritage Committee (WHC) that determined the meaning of OUV.

Prior to the first WHC meeting in 1977, the need to interpret OUV had already occurred. UNESCO worked with two expert groups (one for cultural heritage and one for natural heritage) 'to consider the matter and to propose criteria for [an] inscription that would *de facto* establish the threshold' (Cameron 2009, 128, original emphasis) for OUV. The first criteria for identifying properties as possessing OUV (six criteria/i–vi/for cultural and four criteria/i–iv/for natural properties), as well as other requirements, including the authenticity of cultural properties, were published in the 1977 OG. To be deemed an OUV property, the object should meet one or more of these criteria. However, the concept of OUV 'is not static' (135). The criteria and the requirements have been revised repeatedly and published in subsequent OGs since then.

Table 1 shows the developing definitions of criterion (vi) and authenticity, which are influential factors for listing objects of cultural heritage with a significant intangible dimension, according to the OGs adopted from 1977 to 2021 (Operational Guidelines 1977–2021). Criterion (vi) is one of six cultural criteria that primarily recognizes the intangibility of cultural heritage, whereas meeting the requirement of authenticity is generally a significant challenge ('the statement of authenticity is still the weakest part of any SOUV [Statement of OUV]' [Wijesuriya 2018, 21]), especially in the case where the intangibility of cultural heritage dominates, e.g. when dealing with reconstructed heritage in post-conflict/disaster zones, living heritage, or even the 'restoration/reconstruction of living heritage' (Wijesuriya 2018).

Criterion (vi) – recognizing the intangible aspect of cultural heritage

The *a priori* criterion (vi), which recognizes mainly the intangible dimension (e.g. 'the spirit of the place') of cultural properties considered to be of OUV, was to justify inclusion in the WHL 'only in exceptional circumstances' from 1980 to 2005, and 'in conjunction with other criteria' since 1980. From the outset, 'ICOMOS and the Committee had difficulty with the application of criterion (vi)' (Cameron 2009, 130; see also: Cameron and Herrmann 2018). The initial nominations of properties, including the *Island of Gorée* (Senegal) and *Auschwitz Concentration Camp* (Poland), for recognition based on associative values alone revealed the problem (130). Concerning criterion (vi), the WHC was also challenged by the proposal to nominate the *Historic Centre of Warsaw* submitted by Poland in 1978.

In *Comparative study of nominations and criteria for World Cultural Heritage* prepared on commission and considered by the WHC, Parent (1979, 22) postulated a selective approach toward places that have no architectural merit, but which have been the scene of important historical events. Parent referred to 'the dilemma of Warsaw,' asking if 'a reconstruction of a property which has in fact completely disappeared' should be justified for inclusion on the grounds of authenticity (20). At the same time, Parent remarked that 'authenticity is relative and depends on the nature of the property involved' (19), which should be regarded as groundbreaking 15 years before the adoption of the *Nara Document*. He further wondered if Warsaw 'could nevertheless be placed on the List because of the exceptional historical circumstances surrounding its resurrection' (19) and suggested that its inscription should be based on associative values alone, which was in accordance with the definition of criterion (vi) of the 1978 OG.

In response to Parent's objections, the 1979 WHC session acknowledged that:

> particular attention should be given to cases which fall under criterion (vi) so that the net result would not be a reduction in the value of the List, due to the large potential number of nominations as well as to political difficulties. Nominations concerning, in particular, historical events or famous people could be strongly influenced by nationalism or other particularisms in contradiction with the objectives of the World Heritage Convention. (WHC 1979, 8–9)

In the 1980 revision of the OG, the WHC changed the wording of criterion (vi) imprimis by adding that 'the Committee considered that this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in

Table 1. Developing criterion (vi) and authenticity (definitions) according to the 1977–2021 *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (UNESCO).

Definitions:	Criterion (vi)	Authenticity
1977 OG	'be most importantly associated with ideas or beliefs, with events or with persons, of outstanding historical importance or significance' (para. 7)	'meet the test of authenticity in design, materials, workmanship and setting; authenticity does not limit consideration to original form and structure but includes all subsequent modifications and additions, over the course of time, which in themselves possess artistic or historical values' (para. 9)
1980 OG	'be directly or tangibly associated with events or with ideas or beliefs of outstanding universal significance (the Committee considered that this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in exceptional circumstances or in conjunction with other criteria)' (para. 18 a)	'meet the test of authenticity in design, materials, workmanship or setting(the Committee stressed that reconstruction is only acceptable if it is carried out on the basis of complete and detailed documentation on the original and to no extent on conjecture)' (para. 18 b)
1983 OG	'be directly or tangibly associated with events or with ideas or beliefs of outstanding universal significance (the Committee considers that this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in exceptional circumstances or in conjunction with other criteria)' (para. 21 a)	*ditto* (para. 21 b)
1988 OG	'be directly or tangibly associated with events or with ideas or beliefs of outstanding universal significance (the Committee considers that this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in exceptional circumstances or in conjunction with other criteria)' (para. 24 a)	'meet the test of authenticity in design, materials, workmanship or setting (the Committee stressed that reconstruction is only acceptable if it is carried out on the basis of complete and detailed documentation on the original and to no extent on conjecture)' (para. 24 b i)
1994 OG	'be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance (the Committee considers that this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in exceptional circumstances or in conjunction with other criteria)' (para. 24 a)	'meet the test of authenticity in design, material, workmanship or setting and in the case of cultural landscapes[,] their distinctive character and components (the Committee stressed that reconstruction is only acceptable if it is carried out on the basis of complete and detailed documentation on the original and to no extent on conjecture)' (para. 24 b i)
1997 OG	'be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance (the Committee considers that this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in exceptional circumstances and in conjunction with other criteria cultural or natural)' (para. 24 a)	*ditto*
2005 OG	'be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria)' (para. 77)	'Properties nominated under criteria (i) to (vi) must meet the conditions of authenticity. Annex 4, which includes the Nara Document on Authenticity, provides a practical basis for examining the authenticity of such properties' (para. 79) Attributes expressing authenticity: 'form and design; materials and substance; use and function; traditions, techniques and management systems; location and setting; language, and other forms of intangible heritage; spirit and feeling; and other internal and external factors' (para. 82) 'Attributes such as spirit and feeling do not lend themselves easily to practical applications of the conditions of authenticity, but nevertheless are important indicators of character and sense of place, for example, in communities maintaining tradition and cultural continuity.' (para. 83) 'In relation to authenticity, the reconstruction of archaeological remains or historic buildings or districts is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances. Reconstruction is acceptable only on the basis of complete and detailed documentation and to no extent on conjecture.' (para. 86)
2021 OG	*ditto*	*ditto*

exceptional circumstances or in conjunction with other criteria.' From 2005 until now, only the latter requirement remains (see Table 1).

Ambiguity of the UNESCO authenticity

From the outset, although the very word 'authenticity' did not appear in the *World Heritage Convention*, the 'test of authenticity' has been a qualifying condition for the OUV of cultural heritage. Following the OGs adopted before 2005, authenticity was interpreted from the predominantly European perspective and defined through substantially material or physical attributes. It was the proposed nomination of the *Historic Centre of Warsaw* in 1978 that presented the first challenge for the WHC in terms of authenticity assessment (Cameron 2008, 20; Brumann 2017, 274–275).

In the second half of the 20th century, the Historic Centre of Warsaw underwent a substantial and systematic reconstruction in toto, which was a consequence of the destruction of more than 85% of its fabric during WWII. Due to a heated debate, the case of Warsaw became commonly known all over Western Europe (Tomaszewski 2012, 183). The point was that it was not the historic authentic Old Town of Warsaw that pretended to be included in the WHL, but the place entirely rebuilt in lieu of the one annihilated in 1944 (165–167). According to Zachwatowicz, while dealing with Warsaw's Old Town reconstruction, Polish heritage conservators faced 'a problem without precedent in history and contrary to historic preservation and conservation principles' (182). Nevertheless, exceptional moral and social motives essential for the entire Polish community justified the nomination of Warsaw (165–184). Thus, the WHC and ICOMOS discussed for three years whether the reconstruction, whatever its quality, could 'meet the test of authenticity' (Cameron 2008, 2009). In 1980, the bureau of the WHC finally recommended the *Historic Centre of Warsaw* for inscription 'as a symbol of the exceptionally successful and identical reconstruction of a cultural property which is associated with events of considerable historical significance,' but made it clear that 'there can be no question of inscribing in the future other cultural properties that have been reconstructed' (WHC 1980, para. 4). The same year Warsaw was inscribed on the WHL, the definition of authenticity consequently changed in the OG, to include a new condition: 'reconstruction is only acceptable if it is carried out on the basis of complete and detailed documentation on the original and to no extent on conjecture.' Incidentally, this requirement appears to be unrealistic if the original had not been inventoried prior to its destruction (see also: Khalaf 2019).

Nevertheless, the notion of authenticity was applied inconsistently, even though its definition in the OGs remained virtually unaltered from 1980 to 1994. In the 1980s, the WHC accepted the proposals of the nearly entirely reconstructed *Rila Monastery* (Bulgaria) and considerably reconstructed *Medieval City of Rhodes* (Greece) but deferred the French proposal to inscribe the *Historic Fortified City of Carcassonne* due to significant modifications which impinge upon the site's authenticity (Cameron 2008, 21). Thereafter, in 1994, the definition of authenticity in the OG evolved with the emergence of a new category of cultural landscapes that are, by their nature, 'the epitome of dynamic heritage' (Araoz 2013, 152). Nevertheless, it was not until Japan joined the *World Heritage Convention* that groundbreaking changes 'that stimulated a global discussion on the question of authenticity' occurred (Cameron 2009, 134; see also: Stovel 2008; Araoz 2013; Gfeller 2017). This debate culminated with the preparation of the *Nara Document* of 1994 (Stovel 2008; Akagawa 2016, 22).

Despite the introduction of an element of cultural relativism diminishing 'the weight of authenticity,' the document was to turn out to be 'the Nara breakthrough on authenticity' for international cultural heritage, given that it 'provided the first critical examination of the supposed universalism of a core international cultural heritage norm that was in truth rooted in late-nineteenth-century European history' (Gfeller 2017, 790). To skeptics, the document ended up as 'a ringing endorsement of postmodern relativism' (Glendinning 2013, 429) and its formulations 'broadened the range of what authenticity might be taken to mean,' thus the clarity of its guidelines is debatable (Brumann

2017). Over time, this has resulted in a progressive politicization of the UNESCO authenticity evaluation, and of the WH system in general (Cameron 2009; Brumann 2017).

However, it was only in 1999 that the WHC endorsed the document and ICOMOS adopted it as an official doctrinal text (Cameron 2008, 22). While finalizing the revision of the OG, a proposal to include the *Nara Document* as an annex was discussed and approved in 2003 (22). These changes finally appeared in the 2005 OG, including an expanded and open list of attributes expressing authenticity (among them 'spirit and feeling'). Thus, this revision of the OG marked that the authenticity assessment of cultural heritage could transcend the strictly material focus.

The inscription of the *Old Bridge Area of the Old City of Mostar* (Bosnia-Herzegovina) in 2005 illustrated the application of the newly revised OG. Most of the historic town of Mostar, including the Old Bridge, was heavily destroyed during the civil war in 1992–1995. The medieval bridge, together with its setting, was the subject of major reconstruction activity under the auspices of UNESCO and the World Bank in 2003–2004. Thereupon, ICOMOS had substantial reservations about the authenticity of Mostar, although it recognized that the attributes of authenticity had changed in the light of the 2005 OG. The WHC was also divided on the question of authenticity: some delegates stated that the rebuilding of the surrounding area of the bridge was performed without reference to historical documentation, while others acknowledged both the bridge and the neighboring buildings to be replicas. Considering Mostar to be a site of memory, ICOMOS recommended applying criterion (vi) and compared the place to Warsaw. The associative values of the reconstructed bridge and the old town of Mostar as symbols of hope and reconciliation of communities from different cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds were emphasized by various delegations. Eventually, the WHC inscribed the site under criterion (vi) alone, even though it 'should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria.' The inscription citation defines its intangible aspect (Cameron 2008).

The reconstruction/rebuilding of the WH properties' centerpieces, lost through disasters of natural or human origin, challenges the WH system vis-à-vis authenticity (see also: Khalaf 2017). A replica of the Imperial Palace in Nara (integral part of the *Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara* WH property) was newly constructed on the foundations of an ancient palace to commemorate the 1300th anniversary of Nara as the capital of Japan, and it imitates a building in a different location (Jokilehto 2019, 65). The rebuilding of the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania in Vilnius (integral part of the *Vilnius Historic Centre* WH property) was based on limited iconographic evidence – some sketches from before its destruction in the 18th century (Stovel 2001, 2008; Jokilehto 2019). Destroyed during WWII, the 11th century Dormition Cathedral (integral part of the *Kyiv: Saint-Sophia Cathedral and Related Monastic Buildings, Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra* WH property) was rebuilt in toto in the heart of Kiev, Ukraine (Stovel 2001; Jokilehto 2019). In Riga, Latvia, the House of the Blackheads (integral part of the *Historic Centre of Riga* WH property) was rebuilt on the Town Hall Square – a prominent site vacant since WWII (Stovel 2008). Stovel (2008, 14) argued that the proliferation of 'inauthentic reconstructions' in the newly liberated former Soviet republics was performed in search of statehood symbols, and 'seemed to result in re-creation of former monuments with little or no regard for historical pertinence, accuracy, or context.'

Brumann (2017, 284) argues that 'European violations of Venice Charter purism [concerning the reproducibility of cultural heritage] have been more benignly treated than the non-European ones.' Brumann cites several mostly European examples of WH property reconstructions tolerated by ICOMOS, in which the issue of reproducibility was circumvented in ICOMOS's evaluation (e.g. *Mehmed Paša Sokolović Bridge in Višegrad*, Bosnia-Herzegovina) or downplayed as predating the WH inscription of the given site (incl. *Three Castles, Defensive Wall and Ramparts of the Market-Town of Bellinzona*, Switzerland), and even one WH property under 'tolerated construction' (i.e. *La Sagrada Familia* – integral part of the *Works of Antonio Gaudí* WH property in Barcelona, Spain). Subsequently, Brumann points out the phenomenon of rehabilitation by inscription of European 'Romantic restorations' (e.g. *Castle of the Teutonic Order in Malbork*, Poland), including the stylistic restorations of Viollet-le-Duc (e.g. the above-mentioned Carcassonne, eventually inscribed in 1997). Interestingly, the reference to the *Nara Document* for the timber and earthen structures for which it was originally

intended is much rarer in the WH records. At the other extreme, Brumann enumerates in one breath nearly 20 non-European cases since the mid-nineties in which ICOMOS and/or the WHC admonished recent or ongoing extensive reconstructions and restorations in WH properties (see Brumann 2017).

Overall, to say the least, there is an evident inconsistency in the application of the authenticity requirements in the WH system practice, in particular with regard to reproducibility.

Gdańsk: the spirit of the place

> The history of Gdańsk renders the city exceptional, but the burden of its memory is on the contemporaries. Gdańsk has never been destroyed. There was no need to rebuild it. It has even survived the annihilation. It has such a strong memory that it is difficult to extricate from it. (Loew 2006, 111)

Loew summarized the book dedicated to 'the mythology of Gdańsk' in the above manner. Loew acknowledges Gdańsk as 'an immense congeries (jumble?) of myths' (Loew 2006, 14), but admits that hardly any other city in Central Europe boasts the history of so many pivotal events of the 20th century (Loew 2013, 7). Amongst 'Gdańsk's images of the 20th century' Loew (2013, 7) enumerates in one breath: Westerplatte, workers' strikes, revolt, Solidarity, annihilation, rebuilding, Lech Wałęsa, and Günter Grass. Gdańsk is a *lieu de mémoire*, the European Site of Memory, the Town of Memory and Freedom.[2] History has always been omnipresent there. 'The history of Gdańsk is abundant: it began anew several times' (Loew 2013, 229).

Rebuilding after 1945

Gdańsk was close to imminent destruction at least once: in 1945. During the military campaign and the bombing preceding its liberation in March, approximately 90% of Gdańsk's historic center in an area of 1.2 square kilometers was reduced to rubble (Figure 1). Nevertheless, the history of Gdańsk

Figure 1. Historic center of Gdańsk in 1946–1948, the view from the Main Town hall tower toward the north-east (Photograph: Kazimierz Lelewicz, Faculty of Architecture's collection at the Gdańsk University of Technology).

has moved on: the destroyed *Danzig* (German name for Gdańsk) has been superseded by the rebuilt Gdańsk. The heated debate focused on how the historic center of Gdańsk (imprimis the Main Town) should be rebuilt, which had already ensued by 1945. Although a radical spatial structure transformation following modern urban assumptions was contemplated, the reconstruction in toto as a 'working-class housing estate' in the architectural shape of 'the former Gdańsk' eventually prevailed. According to the political prerogative, the newly planned 'historic' city center was supposed to recall Polish origins and cultural tradition in its architecture to legitimize Gdańsk's affiliation with Poland (Loew 2013; Bukal and Samól 2017; Dymnicka and Szczepański 2016).

The first and the most effective stage of rebuilding – restricted essentially to the Main Town of Gdańsk – began in 1948 and ended in the mid-fifties. Despite the initial assumptions, the rebuilding process cannot be classified as an accurate 'reconstruction.' At no time was it considered a conservation project either, since governmental funds were granted mainly for development. The reconstruction concerned only a small percentage of townhouse façades. The paucity of reliable iconographic documentation, indispensable to reproduce an earlier state of the fabric, was a major concern. Façade stonework relocations were a common practice. Virtually all the Gothic bordering walls (between townhouses), vaults above basements and the preserved annexes were deliberately demolished. An all-new spatial layout was developed: single historical narrow-façade townhouses (approx. 22 m in depth on average; situated on long/approx. 25 up to 40 m/rectangular plots) were superseded by multifamily row housing (approx. 13 m in depth on average), whose fronts were intended to be a contemporary replica of the historic development ('the frontage of reconstructed/relocated/rebuilt individual façades'). Due to this depth reduction, and since the idea of rebuilding the annexes was wholly abandoned, yards were obtained inside the new, open urban blocks, which were essentially intended to be free spaces (e.g. city greens, playgrounds) (Loew 2013; Bukal and Samól 2017; Friedrich 2015).

In view of the combination of the two factors – the traditional and the modern city concepts – Dominiczak (2014) coined the term 'hybrid (re)building' for the rebuilding process of the Main Town. Whereas 'rebuilding' concerns the traditional urban public space network (i.e. streets, public squares, building façades), which is a memory medium and a sign of historical continuity, 'building' concerns the modern trend of creating space for residents such as yards inside urban blocks.

Notwithstanding any controversy, no other European city's destroyed historic center has been rebuilt to such a large extent after WWII (Loew 2013, 238). The rebuilding of Gdańsk proceeded for decades (Bukal and Samól 2017, 6) and has not been completed until now (Gruszkowski et al. 2005, 90; Taraszkiewicz et al. 2021). In the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, significant historical public edifices (e.g. the Main Town hall and churches) were reconstructed in general conformity with the classical conservation doctrine (Bukal and Samól 2017; Loew 2013). Historicizing building complexes were also constructed over time (Bukal and Samól 2017; Loew 2013). Nevertheless, several dozen years after 1945, hardly any visitor to Gdańsk realized that the city was razed to the ground during WWII. In the eyes of the post-war residents, almost all of them newcomers, the rebuilt city has become proper, 'authentic,' Polish Gdańsk. In this way, a new local identity crystallized around the rebuilding of Gdańsk (Loew 2013).

Birthplace of 'Solidarity'

The history of Europe would not have changed course without the strikes of Gdańsk's shipyard workers in August 1980 and the creation of 'Solidarity' (*Solidarność* in Polish). On 14 August, an economic strike began at the Gdańsk Lenin Shipyard and soon afterward spread across the whole Tri-City (i.e. Gdańsk, Gdynia, and Sopot). The workers' revolt turned into a political movement within several days. An alliance between the working class and the intelligentsia against the established authorities was forged, which was unprecedented in Polish history. By the end of August, 700,000 people had joined the strikes all over the country. On 31 August, an agreement was reached at the Gdańsk Lenin Shipyard and the strikes ended with the government legalizing free and independent

workers' unions with the right to strike. On 17 September, the foundation of the Self-Governing Trade Union 'Solidarity' – the world's first independent trade union in a communist country – was proclaimed. Within several months, nearly 9 million people had already joined the new organization. This time of significant social changes, which commenced in the Gdańsk shipyard in August 1980 and lasted 16 months, was called the 'Solidarity carnival' (Loew 2013; Karabel 1993; Bloom 2006; Zalesiński 2014).

In fact, the communists governing Poland had already forfeited their legitimacy in December 1970 during a similar workers' strike in the Tri-City, when the Polish police and army had fired on the strikers, killing a disputed number of workers. One of the witnesses of those events in Gdańsk recalls: 'In those winter days, our view of the world changed. We saw people killed in the streets. (. . .) This experience made us think of Gdańsk as our city' (Pawlak 2014, 58). The bloodshed of December 1970 on the Polish coast and the suppression of further workers' protests in 1976 severed the ties of the communist regime with the working class. Even back then, the situation in Poland already required the conjoining of union activity and the fight for free trade unions with the movement for democracy and national uprising, but back then, the workers lacked the support of the intellectuals (Loew 2013; Bloom 2006; Touraine et al. 2010).

Paradoxically, the Polish government's declaration of martial law on 13 December 1981 turned out to be 'the most profound and definitive defeat of the totalitarian party, the end of communist society and the transition to an open confrontation between the authorities and society, between the state violence and social movements' (Touraine et al. 2010, 307–308). A social movement that originated from Gdańsk became the most important political power in Poland, and in June 1989, it succeeded in creating the first non-communist government in the entire Soviet Block (Loew 2013).

While the 'Solidarity chapter' of the history of Gdańsk appears to be closed (Zalesiński 2014), Poland's Solidarity movement might be acknowledged as one of the most important social movements of the 20th century (Bloom 2006). Touraine (2011) claims that a significant part of the world knows about Gdańsk precisely thanks to what happened there in 1980–1981. Touraine considers 'Solidarity' to be the greatest liberation spurt in the world after WWII, and one of the most significant challenges experienced by mankind in the second half of the 20th century (Touraine et al. 2010).

Gdańsk versus the World Heritage List

Systematic efforts have been made to inscribe Gdańsk on the WHL over more than the last two decades. In 1997, although the first proposed nomination of Gdańsk included essentially the Main Town, the justification of authenticity requirement emphasized the element of original fabric preservation, the assiduousness of rebuilding works based on reliable iconographic resources, and numerous cases of conservation work based on anastylosis. The application for inscription referred to the authenticity definition consequent upon the *Nara Document* of 1994, as well. Nevertheless, when the documentation approved by the assigned ICOMOS expert was submitted to the WHC, behind-the-scenes discussions and conversations among experts revealed serious second thoughts about the authenticity of the rebuilt city and recalled the 1980 WHC directive that the listing of reconstructed Warsaw was not to be taken as a precedent. Consequently, the proposed nomination of Gdańsk was withdrawn and placed on the Polish Tentative List (Gawlicki 2017).

In 2005, the second Gdańsk inscription application was submitted in the documentation entitled 'Gdańsk – Town of Memory and Freedom.' It included Westerplatte and the part of the former Gdańsk Lenin Shipyard where 'Solidarity' was created in addition to the complex of historical buildings of the Main Town. The justification of the proposed inscription was particularly convincing, regarding the intangible aspect of the nominated properties, and thus fulfilled criterion (vi) concerning the direct and tangible association of the site with events, living traditions and ideas of outstanding universal significance. It was the adequacy of legal protection to ensure the conservation of the nominated cultural property (consequent on the local spatial development plan for the former Gdańsk Lenin Shipyard area and its vicinity) that turned out to be questionable this time.

Furthermore, the lack of specific protection of the Imperial Shipyard complex (the historical complex [1871–1922] that forms a significant part of the former Gdańsk Lenin Shipyard) – as listed buildings – raised significant doubts of an ICOMOS expert. Thereupon, the Gdańsk proposal was withdrawn again. In 2009, the newly established Committee for the World Cultural Heritage in Poland acknowledged that the only possible variant of Gdańsk's re-candidacy for the WHL would be a nomination limited to the idea of 'Solidarity' (Gawlicki 2017).

Consequently, in 2020, a nomination of the Gdańsk Shipyard was submitted by Poland. The importance of the shipyard as the birthplace of 'Solidarity' and the symbol of the fall of communism in East-Central Europe was emphasized in its justification. The application covered most of the area of the former Gdańsk Lenin Shipyard and was based on two cultural criteria for the assessment of OUV: criterion (iv)[3] and (vi). In 2021, on evaluation, ICOMOS concluded that:

> the nature of the nomination, related to the memorialisation of and association with 'Solidarity' as a liberation movement suggests that other programmes might be more suitable for the 'Gdańsk Shipyard – the birthplace of "Solidarity" and the symbol of the fall of the Iron Curtain in Europe' than the World Heritage Convention and its List (WHC 2021, 52),

and recommended that the site 'should not be inscribed on the World Heritage List' (52). Apparently, every conservation instrument has its limitations. As Akagawa (2016, 23–24) points out, 'attempts to further define and legislate for the conservation of increasingly subtle intangible elements of meaning may be beyond the capacity and remit of global frameworks' (see also: Smith and Campbell 2017).

Nevertheless, apart from the difficulties with understanding the subtle dissonant meanings, the proposed justification for the inscription of the Gdańsk Shipyard appeared to be unsatisfactory. Neither of the cultural criteria were justified, nor were the requirements of authenticity demonstrated, in ICOMOS's view (WHC 2021). It could be the case that 'making a statement is not the same as demonstrating it' (Boccardi 2019, 13), or it is simply dealing with an intangible heritage case that proves the inappropriateness of applying the requirement of authenticity. While the transmission of *genius loci* is a sine qua non for the protection of the place (Vecco 2020), and 'spirit' was added in 2005 to the list of attributes expressing authenticity in the OG, paragraph 83 contains a caveat regarding its practical application (see Table 1).

The WH system failed to find a consistent method for how authenticity could be universally recognized (Stovel 2007). Khalaf assumes that the requirement of authenticity 'risks being dropped' (Khalaf 2017, 270) due to perceived contradictions and a lack of applicability to intangible cultural heritage, and 'proposes replacing authenticity with continuity' (Khalaf 2020, 245) in the OG. Khalaf (2021) then proposes abandoning the assessment of authenticity in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century, i.e. climate change, 'building back better,' and sustainable development, 'in order to treat properties as evolving processes' (382). Boccardi (2019) acknowledged the very concept of OUV as mutually exclusive in the post-Nara reality. Inasmuch as it is impossible to combine 'recognising heritage as a people-centred and relativist process' on the one hand, and 'insisting on a very top-down, expert-driven, materialistic and universalistic approach to determining its value' on the other (15).

Gdańsk, as a potential WH cultural property, should be instead considered a *lieu de mémoire*, where associations with events, ideas, beliefs and individuals are omnipresent, but left no particular vestiges. In the absence of architectural merit and the character of traditional cultural heritage, a site of memory is cognizable due to a message that makes the site important in the eyes of visitors. Gdańsk – to paraphrase the words of Nora (1989, 7) – is a *lieu de mémoire*, a site of memory, because it is no longer a *milieu de mémoire*, a real environment of memory. According to Araoz (2011), the conservation of such a site, in default of tangible vessels, is 'about preserving a message, and not a place' (59), and to ensure that 'the memory is transmitted to (. . .) the [whole] society' (59).

Drawing from Mulla Sadra's philosophy, Nezhad, Eshrati, and Eshrati (2015) developed an analytical framework for redefining the authenticity of cultural landscape that differentiates between 'true

authenticity' and 'real authenticity.' Whereas 'true authenticity' is 'rooted in depth' (like a core) and has Mulla Sadra's 'essential motion,' 'real authenticity' is what emerges (both in tangible and intangible forms) from 'true authenticity' and 'manifests in surface' in two aspects: static and dynamic (102). The dynamic aspect of 'real authenticity' represents the dimension of cultural landscape that experiences 'the process of becoming in the present time,' which does not necessarily mean that all ensuing changes become permanent (102). Nevertheless, 'each of the tangible and intangible aspects of dynamic authenticity can deposit and become stable through the filter of indigenous peoples' culture' (105).

To address the above conceptual framework for analyzing the authenticity of Gdańsk as a potential WH site, the comparison could be made between the following 'true authenticities': first, the idea of Gdańsk's rebuilding after 1945, and second, the idea of 'Solidarity' being born in Gdańsk. Subsequently, the following critical questions arise: To what extent (if yes) is each of the ideas expressed in tangible and intangible forms? And do both ideas manifest their 'real authenticity'?

The idea of the 'so-called Gdańsk Main Town reconstruction' – initiated by communist politicians – materialized and continues to materialize into structure developed anew but the original residential function of this development is continuously superseded by offices and visitor-driven facilities. In the intangible aspect, although the local identity crystallized around the rebuilding of Gdańsk at some point, the need for legitimization of Gdańsk's affiliation to Poland is currently an outmoded construct. Furthermore, the rebuilt historic Main Town of Gdańsk is considered a commodified version of the historic center rather than a proper city center.

The idea of 'Solidarity' being born in the Gdańsk Shipyard appears to be less expressed in tangible form; the very Health and Safety Hall of the Gdańsk Shipyard where the agreement was signed in August 1980, and the Polish road to freedom and democracy began, however, still exists and is open to the public. The idea of 'Solidarity' – imprimis a source of inspiration and hope for those who do not live in free and democratic societies – is spread all over the world by the European Solidarity Centre (ESC) which was established in 2007 and opened its newly built headquarters at Solidarity Square (near the former shipyard gate) in 2014. In 2016–2019, the various activities and initiatives popularizing the ideals of 'Solidarity,' which were organized by the ESC, attracted about one million visitors annually.[4] It appears that the 'real authenticity' of the universality of the ideals of 'Solidarity' has already manifested itself (e.g. a spontaneous demonstration under the banner of 'Solidarity with Ukraine' took place on Solidarity Square on 24 February 2022). Thus, the 'Solidarity' message is preserved (tangibly and intangibly), and its transmission to all mankind might be ensured. UNESCO recognition would be a formal confirmation, but the WH label will not change the universal significance of this message. The idea of 'Solidarity' is certainly one of the 'elements that link us together as human beings' (Cameron 2009, 127), which corresponds to the very concept of OUV.

Conclusion

Authenticity is 'an ephemeral phenomenon.' Depending on the ideology, the perception of authenticity can be quite diversified, even mutually exclusive.

It might be suggested that the perception of authenticity – as the fundamental issue of conservation philosophy – has been relativized since the mid-twentieth century. The conducted theory/doctrine review demonstrated that the pressure on material authenticity diminished and was superseded by the idea of 'overall authenticity' (Cameron 2008) going beyond fixed criteria (and judged within the appurtenant cultural context) or the 'authenticity of values' (Jokilehto 2006), which was accompanied by increasing consent to heritage reproducibility. The above tendency appears to be perceptible in conservation theory and doctrine, except for doubts regarding the application of the term authenticity in a traditional sense to intangible cultural heritage as expressed in the *Yamato Declaration* of 2004, and the reservation about cultural heritage 'replication' as expressed in the *Riga Charter* of 2000.

In the OGs, the list of strictly material and physical attributes expressing the authenticity of cultural heritage was replaced in 2005 with an extended (with intangible attributes) and open list of attributes. The wording of criterion (vi), which mainly recognizes the intangibility of cultural heritage, did not contain any reservations before 1980, when an alternative to the uniqueness of its use in the justification, or/and its use in conjunction with other criteria, was added. Since 2005, only the requirement of conjunction with other criteria has remained. Interestingly, the reservations about the potential reconstruction of cultural heritage are exclusively contained in the regulations concerning authenticity (presently in paragraph 86, see Table 1). Concerning paragraph 86, as Khalaf (2021, 377) notes, it complies with the logic of the *Venice Charter* and does not correspond to the rest of the paragraphs on authenticity in the OG (paragraphs 79 – 85), which are more in line with the logic of the *Nara Document*. The need to amend the 'unrealistic' paragraph 86 regarding the reconstruction of cultural heritage not inventoried before its destruction is also indicated by Cameron (2019).

From the outset, in the WHC practice, it cannot be stated that the requirement of authenticity is consistently applied; on the contrary, it is quite arbitrary. The decisions of the WHC 'oscillate between Venice and Nara,' including due to the aforementioned contradictions in the paragraphs regarding the authenticity of the OG (Khalaf 2021, 377). Collaterally, the increasing consent to cultural heritage reproducibility (e.g. the proliferation of reconstructions of WH properties in the former Soviet republics and reconstructions of destroyed WH properties in post-conflict/disaster zones) is clearly perceptible in practice (see also: Araoz 2011; Brumann 2017; Khalaf 2019).

The multivariate intangible heritage of Gdańsk challenges the WH system. Juxtaposing the authenticity of 'Gdańsk's resurrection' after 1945 and the authenticity of the 'idea of Solidarity' born in Gdańsk, it could be argued that the 'so-called Gdańsk Main Town reconstruction' (primarily a political rebuilding) turned out to be only 'a structure at the service of local identity discourses and national ideas about Polishness' (Loew 2003, 326). Meanwhile, in this context, the 'idea of Solidarity' that was born in the Gdańsk Shipyard appears to be transmittable as a medium of universal authenticity, with which anyone ever hoping for freedom can identify.

Gdansk's dissonant heritage might be a contribution to the discussion on the integration of UNESCO programs (the *World Heritage Convention* and the UNESCO 2003 *Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*) beyond the 'intangible' and 'tangible' dichotomy in the perception of authenticity and heritage. The multiplication of programs is not a solution, given that it only reduces their rank. Interestingly, Gdańsk's cultural heritage does not fall within the scope of the *World Heritage Convention* – as demonstrated in the previous section – but also falls outside the definition of 'intangible cultural heritage' in the 2003 convention. All cultural heritage has an essential intangible aspect. Thus, due to the coexistence of tangible and intangible elements in cultural heritage, 'the integration of tangible and intangible aspects (. . .) is closer to the meaning of heritage than their separation' (Khalaf 2017, 268). The *Yamato Declaration* propounded integrated approaches for safeguarding tangible and intangible heritage (but questioned the application of authenticity to intangible cultural heritage) and called on UNESCO to adopt and implement 'an inclusive and integrated vision of heritage' (pt 13) in its programs, but without providing any specific guidelines. So, since the concept of authenticity was completely eliminated in the 2003 convention, maybe its abandonment in the *World Heritage Convention*, and more precisely in the OG, would contribute to the integration of both programs concerning cultural heritage?

This study demonstrated that the introduction of an objective definition of authenticity in the WH system is likely to be wishful thinking. Furthermore, *Nara+20: on Heritage Practices, Cultural Values, and the Concept of Authenticity* of 2014 postulated that the determination of authenticity should 'be based on periodic reviews that accommodate changes over time in perceptions and attitudes, rather than on a single assessment' (Nara + 20 2015, pt 2). In this context, paradoxically, the lack of definitions for OUV and authenticity in the *World Heritage Convention* text can be a positive aspect, given that it allows potential flexibility in its implementation. Another argument for preserving authenticity in the WH system is that the list of attributes expressing the authenticity of cultural

heritage, according to the current OG, is open, even unlimited, which lends itself to practical applications of the conditions of authenticity with regard to cultural heritage with a significant intangible dimension. Moreover, the discretionary nature of the assessment of authenticity related to the inability to introduce binary criteria in this assessment requires a constructive discussion to raise cultural awareness in an increasingly homogenized world, transcending the divisions resulting from various cultural contexts.

Finally, this paper suggests the following rewording of criterion (vi) in the OG (paragraph 77): replace the phrase 'this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria' with 'this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in duly justified circumstances based on a case-by-case analysis, involving all stakeholders.' There is every possibility that this change, if not eliminating it entirely, will reduce an operational inconsistency in assessing the authenticity of cultural heritage, with which the WHC is faced, especially with regard to cultural heritage associated with prevailing intangible aspects (e.g. political reconstructions like Mostar). Restoring the autonomy of the 'intangible' criterion (vi) by eliminating the recommendation to link it with other criteria will certainly ensure an equivalent status to this criterion, which would contribute to aligning policy and contemporary practice in the WH system, in particular as regards the recognition of the intangibility of cultural heritage.

(1) In the *Venice Charter* the word 'authenticity' is used once, and only in the preamble. Due to the discrepancy between the English and French versions of the document, its original (French) text was analyzed. Accessed 1 December 2020. https://www.icomos.org/images/DOCUMENTS/Charters/venice_f.pdf
(2) 'Gdańsk – Town of Memory and Freedom' is the title of Gdańsk's second nomination for inclusion on the WHL, which was placed on the Polish Tentative List in 2005. Accessed 12 September 2022. https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/530/
(3) Discussion on the cultural criterion (iv) is beyond the scope of this study.
(4) The data comes from the annual reports of the ESC published on its website. Accessed 11 February 2022. https://ecs.gda.pl/title,Jezyk,pid,52,lang,1.html

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank both anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback. Their insightful comments significantly improved the final result of this work. We would like to thank Maria Nakonieczna for her encouragement and support on the first draft of this paper. Any errors or misinterpretations are entirely the responsibility of the authors.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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