

Challenging the notion of heritage? : Introduction

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CHALLENGING THE NOTION OF HERITAGE?

Introduction

Text: *Silke Andris and Florence Graezer Bideau*¹

When states worldwide ratified the 2003 UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), efforts to document and safeguard tangible and intangible culture reached a new peak. Previous drives from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization that sought to preserve and safeguard culture had been targeted solely at the tangible; monuments and mobile material culture (Unesco 1972). Following the 2003 convention, however, UNESCO's approach broadened to include intangible culture and values. The ICHC aims to sustain «a living, if endangered, tradition by supporting the conditions necessary for cultural reproduction» (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2006: 164).

This editorial critically engages with the momentum towards the notion of intangible cultural heritage. We will present an overview of the many incentives and driving forces that lay behind the enlargement of UNESCO's scope of heritage and which led to the inclusion of intangible heritage within UNESCO's remit. While this editorial, along with most of its contributions, has a specific focus on UNESCO heritage, we also broaden the scope, moving beyond the specific UNESCO framework and engaging with questions

about heritage and critical heritage studies more generally. In this way, this editorial allows for the discussion of calls and efforts to document and safeguard intangible cultural practices long before the ratification of the 2003 Convention as well as discussing incentives that have helped further a reflexive and decentralised approach to cultural heritage.

There are two approaches that are of particular importance in challenging dominant heritage discourses, as well as in the creation of a new notion of intangible cultural heritage (ICH). The first involves changes to concrete experiences and measures taken by national or international institutions (states, Ministries of Culture, conservation departments, UNESCO, etc.) or associations (ICOMOS, ICOM, etc.) that serve to define and manage the activity of «taking care of a common good» on either a local or global scale (Berliner & Bortolotto 2013, Graham et al. 2000). The second concerns the work of many academic institutions and disciplines that are traditionally concerned with questions of conservation of cultural goods and practices – such as archaeology, art history, law and history. These disciplines are joined by social sciences such as anthropology, cultural studies, economy, ethnology, folklore, linguistic, geography and political sciences, which have

¹ We are grateful to the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) for funding our research projects on intangible cultural heritage, namely the projects «Intangible Cultural Heritage: The Midas Touch» and «Intangible Cultural Heritage in Switzerland: Whispered Words». Moreover, we want to thank the Federal Office for Culture, especially the Culture and Society Section, for funding the publication of this dossier on cultural heritage. We also benefited greatly from the thoughtful comments and inputs of Ellen Hertz, Cyril Isnart and Kate Forbes-Pitt. We also wish to acknowledge the work and support provided by the whole Tsantsa team, including the board's two anonymous reviewers.

challenged the notion of heritage through their critique and, occasionally, through direct treatment of particular case studies (Bondaz et al. 2014, Hertz & Chappaz-Wirthner 2012).

Many Western and Eastern countries undertook large surveys of folklore and popular culture within the framework of the nation-building process (Anderson 1991, Fabre 1996, Hobsbawn & Ranger 1983, Hung 1985). In this dossier we address current and historic «heritage peaks» when individuals, communities, states and/or international organisations became involved in the promotion of cultural values and therefore demanded the safeguarding of (endangered) material and immaterial culture and practices. With this in mind, as guest editors we highlight three areas of interest:

Firstly, we draw attention to the particular circumstances under which ICHC was implemented, for this is the moment when global policy had to become both translated into and adapted to local politics. There are numerous examples of current research projects that closely follow the notion of ICH and the ratification and implementation processes of the ICHC in different countries around the world. They elaborate on questions of how different communities and state governments define their ICH. In particular, what they have included and excluded from ICH inventories and which operations and efforts are officially regarded as best practice in order to document and safeguard ICH. In this way, they draw attention to the particular natures of different UNESCO heritage regimes (Bendix et al. 2012, Bortolotto 2011, Graezer Bideau 2014a, Heinich 2009, Poulot 2006) that embody highly specialised international administration and cooperation in the field of safeguarding of cultural and natural UNESCO heritage (practices and sites). The ICHC represents the politically charged intervention of national and international bureaucratic structures into the practices of communities, groups and individual producers of culture. Such intervention continues to trigger controversial reactions among locals and it is imperative to analyse the specific implications of these, as well as the short- and long-term effects of the interplay between local, national and international operations as the articles by Caroline Bodolec, Maya Ishizawa and Julie Perrin demonstrate.

Secondly, we address the new strategies within the UNESCO nomination system, especially for multi-national candidatures. UNESCO appears to encourage this move from national to multi-national candidatures in order to move away from the problems of a seemingly never-ending production of lists as well as to encourage sustainable and feasible safeguarding and management operations. Salvatore Bevilacqua addresses the increase of initiatives and candidatures related to the food sector – the Mediterranean diet and the use of olive

oil, for example – that have been submitted to UNESCO as examples of cultural systems. These multi-national candidatures raise questions about the assumed site-specificity of heritage as well as of heterodox places of heritage. It seems that what these transnational places of heritage have in common is less a question of geography, and more one of a narrative that describes them as areas of creation and invention and allows the promotion of particular heritage «products». Julie Perrin draws similar conclusions when she discusses wild plants and medication and describes practitioners' own narratives about economical, agricultural and biological feasibility as well as sustainability. In contrast, Maya Ishizawa raises serious questions about the feasibility of multinational co-operation in the conservation of landscapes and cultural values.

Thirdly, we broaden the discussion and introduce research that addresses heritagisation processes more generally and outside of the UNESCO framework. This means going against the dominant (UNESCO) heritage discourse that so far excludes contemporary, modern, glocal and urban intangible heritage in favour of heritage that is described as traditional, old and rural. Theresa Beyer enters these debates with an exploration of New Swiss Folk Music and an in-depth discussion of tendencies of revitalisation, reinterpretation and artistic appropriation of cultural practices that are already regarded and acknowledged as heritage. While UNESCO projects aim to revitalise transmission systems for such knowledge and skills that are required for the conservation and contemporary production of traditional practices through documentation, education and training programs and activities, New Swiss Folk Music aims to break away from both the traditional systems of transmission and the nationalistic discourses that have surrounded folk music. Salvatore Bevilacqua's article presents another example of going beyond the UNESCO framework. In contrast with the article by Theresa Beyer, Bevilacqua engages with other dominant discourses concerned with medical and nutritional issues.

Enlarging the scope of heritage: from tangible to intangible

While the concept of ICH is not new, the term «ICH» was officially introduced in 1982 at the UNESCO Mexico Conference and led to many discussions and measures that were concluded within the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of ICH. This Convention is, in many ways, regarded as an attempt to redress the shortcomings of the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World, Cultural and Natural Heritage. Under the auspices of the World Heritage Convention, it had only been material culture that

was considered worth safeguarding. The list of material cultural heritage is dominated by monumental or grand aesthetic sites and places in Europe and had been heavily criticised for being Eurocentric. Clearly UNESCO recognised the importance of enlarging its scope of heritage definitions to include the intangible, with value given to places or sites that were receiving increased attention in 1992 when natural heritage became associated with local living systems and hence it became possible to inscribe «cultural landscapes». This inventory officially includes places that represent outstanding practices of land use as well as places that are «directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works» (UNESCO 1992). However, the search for a binding treaty that would lead to the safeguarding of ICH was not straightforward and included several (stumbling) steps such as the 1989 UNESCO Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore, the UNESCO Living Human Treasures Programme (1993) and the Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity (1997 / 1998).

The 1989 Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore, a non-binding treaty, used the concepts of «folklore» and «traditional culture» rather than the term «intangible culture». In some countries, both terms continue to occupy the same discursive field as intangible culture (Bondaz et al. 2014). Moreover, the definition of this recommendation also supported the idea that there are strict divisions between high and low culture, as well as a division between fine arts and handicrafts. Some anthropologists aim to overcome such distinctions, arguing that they make little sense in many non-European contexts (Andris et al. 2011, Noyes 2006). The 1989 document supports the idea that cultural practices are regarded as pre-modern and indigenous to a particular place and community, which has a strong resonance with the 2003 convention (Andris 2010).

While scholars, experts and institutions were only encouraged to record and make an inventory of disappearing traditions for preservation, the 1993 Living Human Treasures Programme, as well as the 1997 / 1998 Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, further broadened the approach to heritage, demanding the maintenance of the intangible heritage by both supporting and safeguarding its practitioners. Systems of Living Human Treasures were developed primarily in Japan and South Korea

and were closely related to the concept of «ICH» (UNESCO 2002). In 1955 and 1962 respectively, Japan and South Korea nominated their first intangible cultural properties along with their «holders». They defined these as Living Human Treasures, that is: «those who have mastered or possess exceptional skills in arts and crafts» (UNESCO 2002: 13). The Living Human Treasures receive stipends and must, in turn, become trainers of younger generations as well as making intangible cultural heritage available to the public (UNESCO 2002: 14-15). Several programs that focused on artists or the performing arts were set up in the Philippines, Thailand and the USA in the 80s, followed by programmes focusing specifically on crafts in European countries such as France, the Czech Republic, and Poland (UNESCO 2002: 16-18).

Asian influence in intangible heritage

Asian countries made great efforts to shape the 2003 Convention and many authors have shown how Asian perspectives challenge the western hegemony of the «Authorised Heritage Discourse» (Daly & Winter 2011, Smith 2006, Smith & Agawaka 2009, Winter 2014). Tim Winter, for example, shows how Japanese, Korean and Chinese programs (among others) tried to redress current asymmetries and in doing so created new polarities. Many have argued that the 1994 Nara document on authenticity should be considered as the turning point of the reflexion on the polarities between tangible and intangible, fixed and dynamic heritage. It reviews the use of authenticity and integrity as conditions for «outstanding universal value» and for an inscription on the World Heritage List (UNESCO 1972). Consequently, it addressed the need for a broader understanding of cultural diversity and cultural heritage in relation to conservation and safeguarding practices (Munjeri 2004).

East Asia's strong presence is also expressed in the implementation of regional centres for training, educating and knowledge exchange between communities and outside experts. This network of new centres of ICH declarations based in the East² has had the effect of what Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) would call «provincialising Europe». They help to question the dominant heritage discourses and produce heterodox knowledge that goes beyond classical polarities such as nature / culture, tangible / intangible, art / craft or concrete / abstract realities. Thus, Tim Winter concludes,

² For more information refer to: Shanghai on principles for the conservation of heritage sites in China in 2002, Okinawa on intangible and tangible cultural heritage in 2004, Xi'an on the conservation of the setting of heritage structures, sites and areas in 2005, Chengdu on protection of intangible cultural heritage in 2007 and Seoul on heritage and the metropolis in Asia and the Pacific in 2007.

these Asian perspectives can be perceived and analysed as «products of resistance and interpretation at local / national level in Asia toward the infrastructures of global heritage governance» (2014: 12).

The proclamation of the 2003 Convention

Together, these efforts led to a fundamental shift away from safeguarding monuments and artefacts and towards safeguarding communities and individuals, together with the knowledge and skills transmitted from generation to generation. The UNESCO definition of ICH created five domains to categorise cultural reality and help the states to identify their intangible heritage: oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe and traditional craftsmanship (UNESCO 2003).

The purposes of the ICHC are given in Article 1: Firstly to safeguard ICH, secondly to ensure respect for ICH, thirdly to raise awareness at local, national and international levels of the importance of ICH and thus to ensure a mutual appreciation of it and lastly to provide international cooperation and assistance. These four purposes show that the Convention operates on three levels, local, national and international and that it encourages interplay between them. Since each state is obliged to implement the Convention into national instruments, the national or state level is the most powerful in shaping the ratification and implementation process.

One of the primary obligations that the 2003 Convention imposes on states is to compile national inventories of intangible heritage. This means that selection and exclusion become key elements of the system of heritage and much critical debate has focused on the creation, designation and purpose of official ICH lists, the «Representative List of the ICH of Humanity» and the «List of ICH in Need of Urgent Safeguarding» (Goody 1977, Hafstein 2009, Leimgruber 2010, Nas 2002). In this respect, ICH resembles World Heritage, for «world heritage is first and foremost a list. Everything on the list, whatever its previous context, is now placed in a relationship with other masterpieces. The list is a context for everything on it» (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004: 57). Yet, while there are legacies from previous heritage conventions, the ICHC contains two major, ground-breaking changes for an international heritage policy; it clearly states the centrality

of the community (group or individual) to ICH and demands both their involvement and the safeguarding of the management of the ICH. Hence, the identification of ICH depends on its recognition by the communities who are continuously recreating it and to whom it provides a sense of community. It is only through heritage's enactment by practitioners that ICH has any existence and by their active transmission that it can exist in the future (Waterton & Smith 2010, Tauschek 2010). It is no longer governments or heritage organisations that are the main custodians of national heritage, but communities and herein lies its ground-breaking change. Ideally, this means that governments must discard top-down approaches and include communities in the decision- and policy-making as well as in the safeguarding and management of ICH.

Decentralised and reflexive approach to heritage

The change in critical approach to heritage analysis that has evolved in recent decades has arisen from many perspectives. The notion of heritage has been a central subject of anthropological research, for example, and many anthropologists and folklorists have observed and discussed the different efforts to document and safeguard material and immaterial culture that have been pursued by different countries (Bendix & Hasan-Rokem 2012, Bondaz et al. 2012, Eggmann 2007, Lowenthal 1998). The new drive to safeguard ICH has both furthered a comparative and a multi-disciplinary approach to heritage studies and has resulted in its internationalisation. Moreover, interest has shifted away from a fixed concept of what constitutes heritage towards a reflection on the limits of the heritage concept, its exclusive definitions and «westernised» parameters. This became apparent in the Conference title «Re / Theorising heritage», which culminated in the creation of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies (ACHS) held at the University of Gothenburg in June 2012. This large, academic event brought together scholars from different cultural contexts who exchanged epistemological perspectives and national traditions related to heritage as well as claims for the necessity of further reflection by practitioners, professionals and scholars, something emphasised in its 2012 *Manifesto*³, from which the following passage is taken:

«Heritage is, as much as anything, a political act and we need to ask serious questions about the power relations that «heritage» has all too often been invoked to sustain. Nationalism, imperialism, colonialism, cultural elitism, Western triumph-

³ For more detail, see <http://criticalheritagestudies.org>.

phalism, social exclusion based on class and ethnicity, and the fetishising of expert knowledge have all exerted strong influences on how heritage is used, defined and managed».

We do not dispute the many effects of the valuation and perhaps uncritical fetishising of expert knowledge. However, we wish to acknowledge both the ongoing discussions that challenge the endeavours of colleagues and the implications of those endeavours that have led to some advances in the field (Bortolotto 2007, Bendix 2011, Hafstein 2004, Kuutma 2009). Indeed, we would like to hear more from researchers who openly reflect about the «many roles» occupied by colleagues as researchers, advisers, policy-makers and UNESCO employees and / or delegates within the critical heritage debate (Graezer Bideau 2014b, Tornatore 2004, 2007).

Moreover, it would be interesting to see more programmes bringing together different areas of study. Programmes such as those of the Centre for Heritage and Museums Studies at the Australian National University, which focus on questions related to cultural and natural heritage, museums and collections⁴ or those at the University of Göttingen, which have several interdisciplinary research units analysing the intertwined relationship of fields of heritage and state policies, economics and law.⁵ In East Asia, the programme committee of the «Asia in Motion: Heritage and Transformation»⁵ conference held at the National University of Singapore (NUS) strongly favoured panels that included participants from different countries, different academic institutions and different disciplines in order to engage with issues of cultural heritage, especially nations or panels that introduced a comparative dimension to the heritage debate.

We offer one last example to bring out the scope of such critical heritage projects as we describe in more detail. Two Swiss multidisciplinary projects, «ICH: the Midas Touch?» and «ICH in Switzerland: Whispered Words», constitute examples of critical thinking about heritagisation-processes and their effects.⁶ Involving different institutional entities across the country (Neuchatel, Basel and Lausanne), these five-year-long programmes bring together different academic disciplines (anthropology, cultural studies, dialectology, ethnology, folklore and museum studies) to discuss the current

making of the Swiss inventory under the auspices of the Federal Office for Culture. Using a mixture of case studies and theoretical reflections, they explore the principal issues raised by ICH in the Swiss context. Guided by a common set of research goals, questions and methods, the six research groups tackle the heritage object from a variety of angles: an institutional ethnography of the ongoing inventory process at the federal and cantonal level (Graezer Bideau 2012b, Hertz & Grignoli 2012); collections of stories told in franco-provincial dialect (Diémoz & Reusser-Elzingre 2014); the exclusion of artistic, urban and «glocal» practices as exemplified by hip-hop (Andris 2014) and theatre practices in migrant contexts (Cohn 2012); the «traditional» healing practices using wild plants and prayers in Wallis (Perrin 2013) and the watch-maker know-how in the Jura region (Munz 2012). It also included a trilogy of ethnographic exhibitions on representation and display of ICH in museums (Gonseth et al. 2011, 2013). This collaborative project is attempting to integrate diverse intellectual traditions to enlarge theoretical insights and describe and analyse Swiss national heritage «in the making». Particular focus is given to Switzerland's democratic institutions and how they intersect with heritage policy, exploring the question of inclusion or exclusion of specific individuals and groups as well as the effects of the Convention's implementation on both.

The dossier

The selection of contributions for this dossier took inspiration from, and was strongly influenced by, the developments and tendencies we describe within critical heritage studies. While all of the authors employ ethnographic fieldwork methods, and most are trained anthropologists, they work within different academic and professional fields. Their work on tangible or intangible heritage opens up debates and will cover a wide range of topics, from cultural legacy for internal and external symbolic uses to the interplay between food and medical narratives at an international scale.

Caroline Bodolec's article sets the scene for the implementation of the 2003 Convention. She shows how China became a major cultural actor since it began to play an active role in important international organisations within the UN, WTO,

⁴ <http://archanth.anu.edu.au/heritage-museum-studies>, accessed May 10, 2014.

⁵ For more detail, see <http://cultural-property.uni-goettingen.de/?lang=de>.

⁵ <http://www.aas-in-asia.org/index.htm>, accessed May 10, 2014.

⁶ Both projects were coordinated by Ellen Hertz at the Institute of Anthropology at the University of Neuchatel and were financed by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) between 2009 and 2014. For more detail, see <http://www2.unine.ch/ethno/cms/lang/fr/pid/28437>.

UNESCO, UNHCR, the World Bank, IMF, ILO, etc.. In the specific area of culture, China is an interesting case study that serves to highlight to what extent cultural policies at the national level are intertwined with international programmes. China is also an example of a country that looks for legitimacy and symbolic prestige in the new heritage competition among worldwide states through an efficient inventory process, regular candidatures and tools of promotion that are tested within its territory, but are open to all stakeholders abroad. Indeed, major items selected since 2008 (earlier items were proclaimed masterpieces of ICH) highlight the diversity and magnificence of a «great civilisation» that has a long history of mixing elite and popular cultures and stress explicitly its social and cultural coherence, including ethnic minorities. It is interesting to observe that the criteria for identifying ICH for inclusion in the national inventory enhances values of excellence and what is remarkable (or outstanding) yet conflicts with the nature of the 2003 Convention in which the purpose was to move beyond the ethnocentric approaches of evaluating cultural heritage that were largely expressed in the 1972 Convention. Culture and politics have been entangled in China from the mid-20th Century to date (Graezer Bideau 2012a), mainly due to the making and implementation of cultural policy throughout the country, from the centre to peripheries, via the chain of administration and fields of expertise that consider culture to be a political tool for promoting governmental ideology. The Chinese slogan «use the past to better serve the present» is pertinent, it shows a strong emphasis on identifying ICH as symbolic domination, a narrative that is both intended for the whole nation and for the international arena. A finer and deeper analysis of the state regime, however, can enhance arenas of economic and political interests that seek to appropriate heritage resources. At the grassroots level, ICH can give voice to interpretations of local communities that derive diverse answers to the normative pressures of heritage understood as a form of governmentality.

As already mentioned, heritage is shadowed by list making and many have commented on the creation, designation and purpose of heritage lists. Theresa Beyer's article is both a departure from, and an important addition to, these debates, exploring the field of practitioners' personal listing-practices and listing-systems. She analyses repertoires and set-lists of practitioners of New Swiss Folk Music in order to engage with questions about the social and historical construction and conditionality of selection processes within the field of music. New Swiss Folk musicians are trained in schools of music and art from which they go and search for «rare» and «authentic» material on the Internet, in archives or in CD collections. They rarely leave their urban setting to consult players in rural areas. As a result, the material selected

today has already served the primary function of providing a foundation of proof and verification for artistic, academic and musical assumptions made by previous collectors and safeguarders. However, the musicians themselves critically discuss the constructed quality of the assumptions made by previous collectors and safeguarders in a highly self-reflexive way and identify their own evaluation and verification system as a construction based on aesthetic, political, social and personal criteria. Thus, New Swiss Folk Music is the result of a quasi-scientific selection activity that closely follows the requirements of a subjective, as well as highly reflective, design as a modern and urban artist. With a close (ear and) eye on musicians' personal inventories of musical pieces, Theresa Beyer shows how a chosen piece of music becomes abstracted from its previous context and placed in relation to other items that have already been selected into the category of heritage. Musicians' repertoires and set-lists rely heavily on processes of discontinuity and selection. In this respect, as Hafstein argues, «heritage and lists are not unlike one another: both depend on selection, both decontextualise their objects from their immediate surroundings and recontextualise them with reference to other things designated or listed. It is hardly surprising, then, that listing seems constantly to accompany heritage making» (Hafstein 2009: 92).

Maya Ishizawa draws attention to the UNESCO listings of cultural landscapes under the assumption that they represent outstanding examples of land use that are «directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works» (UNESCO 2011). Questions about community involvement in the safeguarding and conservation of landscapes, as well as practices and policies of conversation form the core of this article. Introducing the examples of the Archaeological Park of Ollantaytambo in Peru and the National Park of Ordesa and Monte Perdido in Spain, Ishizawa highlights the complexities and consequences of what happens after UNESCO heritage conventions are ratified by states and how the UNESCO's global safeguarding and conservation policies interact with existing policies and measures to protect cultural landscapes and intangible practices. For example, the effort to adopt yet another global heritage regime forces a myriad of adaptations on a particular state and on interstate modalities in order to maintain and manage the National Parks of Ordesa and Monte Perdido in Spain. Yet it is not only the clash of incongruent conservation policies and practices of different heritage regimes that are of interest, Ishizawa also draws out the potential frictions within the UNESCO's own conventions and conservation policies. It is in the second part of her paper that she draws attention to the severe problems caused when indigenous and local commu-

nities are ignored and no longer have a say in the safeguarding and management of their heritage and ramifications of these. It is here that Ishizawa allows the reader to grasp what is going to happen to cultural landscapes without the active involvement of communities. If they are excluded, processes of safeguarding and conservation become meaningless, or worse, mere cases of appropriation of heritage by national governments, taking it away from the control of the communities that have created and maintained it.

Issues of translation are at the core of Julie Perrin's reflexion. Her article shows, from a historical perspective, how the perception of wild plants and the practices of using them have changed and how actors or entities mobilise them for fixing norms and values. Created by breaks and successive selections in the transmission of such practices, she explains the role of spokespersons in the enhancement of foraging heritagisation in which narratives generate a new ideology that objectivises a new field of investigation with medicinal and aromatic plants. That the publication of the naturalist Wolf's textbook in 1906 and its use in schools impacted the social relations between local actors and institutions dealing with plants is emblematic. Perrin attaches particular significance to the role played by official entities. Her article thoroughly describes federal or cantonal narratives regarding the world of alpine peasantry underlying the bias of urban elites or consumers of «natural goods» who want to preserve specific and traditional know-how and understanding of nature associated with an innovative, scientific and rational perspective. In her analysis of the mechanisms that led to a selection process, she unveils an interesting facet in the making of the foraging dossier, identifying two different reasons for its inclusion in the national or the cantonal list. Firstly, the argument focuses on the continuity and the preservation of a «common good» and secondly on the promotion of a niche-market that contributes to the achievement of a sustainable economy in line with national and regional policy. By highlighting these distinctive but complementary arguments, the author shows how «the remains» are both recycled and generated anew. It is in this sense that heritage is a meta-cultural operation as Kirshenblatt-Gimblett explains: a «mode of cultural production that has recourse to the past and produces something new» (2004: 1).

Salvatore Bevilacqua's article gives an account of a new field of heritage that has been explored with the inscription of the French gastronomy in the Representative List of the Humanity in 2010. Indeed, this candidature of national culinary tradition generated controversial debates on the limits of the heritage definition and questioned the identity of the stakeholders that supported such propositions (Tornatore 2012). It also opened the door to new categories of items

related to food studies (Turkish coffee; Mediterranean diet, etc.) that can claim inscriptions. The case studied by Bevilacqua draws attention to an extension of the areas covered by heritage studies. It first discusses the articulation between medical and ICH narratives in the making of the Mediterranean diet, characterised by its use of olive oil, as a multinational candidature. He takes three different cases, the Swiss Cardiology Foundation, Michelle Obama's commitment for healthier food programme and the emblematic village of Pioppi where the Mediterranean diet was scientifically tested to describe the complex relations between international organisations, such as WHO and agronomic entities, with national, regional and local projects. His contribution also questions some recurrent discussions concerning the 2003 Convention. It first challenges the central notion of territory within the process of heritagisation. He then turns his attention to the new trend of multinational candidatures that are encouraged by UNESCO in order to avoid a «never ending» open list that would serve to depreciate the existing items on the Representative List of Humanity, as David Harvey (2001) has already pointed out. His reading of this international and interdisciplinary comparison finally attests the scientific diplomacy or soft power that nations use to identify and select ICH items that are considered as «good» practices, visible and legitimate on the worldwide scene.

The ICH call for action is almost overwhelming in its sheer magnitude, as Kirshenblatt-Gimblett explains, it means «according value to the «carriers» and «transmitters» of traditions as well as to their habitus and habitat. Whereas intangible heritage is culture, like tangible heritage, it is also alive, like natural heritage. The task, then, is to sustain the whole system as a living entity and not just to collect «intangible artifacts» (2006: 164). By combining and juxtaposing the articles in this dossier as we have done, the questions surrounding the magnitude, scale and ambition of the ICH call for action become apparent. Taken together, the contributions provide new insights into the specific operations and efforts to identify, document and safeguard diverse societies and nation states.

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