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HERITAGE-AS-PROCESS AND ITS AGENCY: PERSPECTIVES OF (CRITICAL) HERITAGE STUDIES

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The cultural heritage was defined in the 19th century in many European countries and the United States as "objects of cultural value." In the context of building national states mostly material objects, archaeological sites and historical monuments, were marked as heritage. Further transformation of the concept of heritage took place after the World War II, when not only national and mostly European states, but also new international organizations (United Nations, UNESCO and later European Union) began to re-define and revise cultural heritage.

The large-scale transformations in the social sciences and the humanities in the 1960–70s influenced the formation a new research field in the 1980s, *heritage studies*. Using the approaches taken from public history and cultural, memory, postcolonial and gender studies, heritage studies conceptualize heritage in more broad temporal boundaries and network of agents involved in the process of its formation. Within heritage studies, cultural heritage covers the sphere of ordinary and everyday life, distant and recent past, different social groups and their vision of heritage.

In the 2000s, heritage studies were debated. As a result, a new field of *critical heritage studies* emerged. The key task put in the field was to analyze discursive practices of defining and using heritage primarily by state and international institutions (the so-called "Authorized Heritage Discourse"). The scholars conceptualize heritage as a process, discourse and participatory cultural phenomenon. So, heritage is understood as a constant rethinking and redefinition cultural values by different agents—social groups, media, institutions, which are also constantly changing.

The paper examines the research fields of *heritage studies* and *critical heritage studies* in Europe. It provides an overview of their development and subsequent changes, as well as the main research issues and problems.

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Introduction

The concept of cultural heritage is currently both a big part and a huge resource of historical policy in most countries of the world. Its significance is enshrined in law (both state and international), the rhetoric connected to heritage is widely represented in media. At the same time, this concept remains fluid and is constantly rethinking. Its new definitions are widely discussed not only in the humanities and social sciences, but also within the public sphere.

Since the 1980s, discussions concerning both theoretical and practical issues, take place within the framework of a new research field, *heritage studies*. The field combines research approaches of different disciplines and widens the very concept of cultural heritage, taking into account participant (agents) who influence meaning of heritage.

The paper examines the contemporary research fields dealing with heritage, *heritage studies* and *critical heritage studies* emerged in the 2000s. It provides an overview of their development and subsequent changes, as well as the main research issues and problems.

Heritage studies: a complex approach to research of cultural heritage

The concept of cultural heritage, implying a consistent policy of its preservation, became widespread by the beginning of the 20th century in most countries in Europe and North America. At that time, heritage was identified as a list of material objects of "high cultural and historical value," primarily at a state level. Despite certain ideas emerged in the 18th century, the concept of heritage was developed in the 19th century, when the first decrees on the protection of historical and cultural monuments were adopted in Europe. One-sided (state) determination of the list of cultural heritage sites and implementation of its centralized preservation policy established by the end of 19th century.

Most consistently, such views were put in the concept of "historical monument" proposed by the Austrian historian Alois Riegl in his work "Der moderne Denkmalkultus, sein Wesen, seine Entstehung" (1903) [Riegl, 1903]. In his work, Riegl emphasized the need for strict state regulation of the list of material objects that are important to history and have cultural and intellectual value. According to Stepan Stureiko, "in this national paradigm, monuments were presented as material confirmation of historical path, demonstration of historical roots and achievements" [Stureiko, 2017, p. 202]. In this regard, when identifying objects, the problem of authenticity of monuments

became a key issue of cultural heritage, and the experts who determine their authenticity were a narrow circle of specialists under the supervision of state institutions [Koziol, 2008, p. 41–45].

By the mid-20th century, cultural heritage has become not only a key resource for the formation of national identities, but also an important factor in international politics. This was facilitated by the creation of UNESCO in 1946. Under the auspices of the organization, the repatriation of heritage sites was carried out after World War II and in the process of decolonization of the European empires (primarily Great Britain and France). UNESCO initiated the development of the concept of "World Cultural Heritage," which was later enshrined in the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972) [Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage]. As a result, the understanding of cultural significance of national monuments was revised, which turned out to be important not only at the level of an individual national state, but on a global scale. In addition, the circle of experts assessing the authenticity of monuments has expanded and become more complex––there national representative offices of UNESCO have appeared (and continue to appear), cooperating with local state institutions on the assessment and preservation of cultural monuments.

A large-scale revision of the concept of cultural heritage in many European countries started in the 1980s and was associated with transformation of urban historical policy and emergence of new state and urban programs to stimulate development of cultural tourism. Deep changes in cultural and historical policy were influenced by the European Capital of Culture project launched in 1985 [European Capitals of Culture]. The project drew attention to the history and heritage of European cities and increased investment in the cultural sector. Preparation for the city's participation in the program involves restoration of historical monuments, creation of new public places and museums, and organization of culture festivals to celebrate urban history and cultural heritage. In the UK, at the same time, a "culture-led regeneration" program was launched. Its main task was to renew cities and stimulate the local economy through the development of the cultural sector [Vickery, 2007].

Transformations in social sciences and the humanities in the 1960–80s also significantly influenced new concepts of cultural heritage and approaches to its analyses. Previously, heritage was the subject of interests of various social disciplines and the humanities—history, philosophy, sociology of culture, museology, archival studies, etc., each of which offered its own understanding of this concept. The emergence of such new disciplines as public history, memory studies, cultural and gender studies, postcolonial studies contributed to the development of an interdisciplinary comprehensive understanding of cultural heritage, which defined the field of *heritage studies*

[Ashworth et al., 2007; Stig Sørensen et al., 2009; Logan et al., 2016]. This area has brought together researchers from different disciplines (history, sociology, cultural geography, philology, etc.), mainly from European countries, Great Britain, North America and Australia. With the commonality of approaches in various linguistic and national scientific traditions, heritage studies are problematized and institutionalized in different ways.

In British heritage studies, the works of the American-British historian David Lowenthal became fundamental, at first place—"The Past is a Foreign Country" (1985) [Lowenthal, 1990] and "The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History" (1996) [Lowenthal, 2012]. Lowenthal theocratizes the idea of past and memory, rethinking at the same time the temporal boundaries of heritage. Focusing on the study of modern historical culture and practices of dealing with the past in Europe after World War II, he notes the increasing importance of artifacts of the past, serving as a kind of tools for describing modernity. In this regard, he identifies three key features of heritage in contemporary societies. First, speaking about the cultural value of material objects of the distant past, Lowenthal notes an incredible significance of objects and events related to the recent past: equally recognized both national monuments and family heirlooms and children's toys for different social groups [Lowenthal, 1989]. Accordingly, the conversation about authenticity moves from the perspective of expert's evaluation to the perspective of emotions and individual memory. Second, Lowenthal marks the ever-increasing value of those cultural forms that were previously considered massive, replicated and non-unique: from cinema and popular music to comics and computer games. Third, he points to the growing antiquarianism and commercialization of heritage. For example, home furnishings of the recent past (vinyl records, turntables, radios, etc.) or fan collections (posters, concert tickets, autographs, etc.) are presented at museums on a par with national relicts. It should be noted that Lowenthal's ideas were embodied in the work of the public foundation "English Heritage" [English Heritage] formed in the UK in 1985. From the very beginning the foundation set the goal of preserving a variety of cultural monuments: from Victorian estates to music clubs.

Developing Lowenthal's ideas, British social and public historian, researcher of oral history Raphael Samuel examines the changing understanding of cultural heritage, emergence of new social and commemorative practices that are eventually marked as cultural heritage, as the main features of contemporary historical culture. History and heritage are "the work of a thousand hands now," notes Samuel [Samuel, 1996, p. 42].

Analyzing the experience of using the UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and relying on the works of Lowenthal and Samuel, British heritage

studies are focused not only on the idea of heritage preservation and restoration, but also on how the boundaries of the concept of heritage can be moved [Fairclough et al., 2008; Stig Sørensen et al., 2009; Logan et al., 2016]. Among the basic approaches developed in the field, the following can be singled out: first, perspective of "history from below" and interest to an ordinary man, his everyday life and involvement in social, cultural, political and other processes; second, interest in those social groups that for a long time remained little or no studied at all (youth, migrants, women, etc.); third, the study of popular culture and its significance in various identification processes. In addition, under the influence of postcolonial studies, the Eurocentrism of the concept of world heritage was problematized.

As a result, the concept of cultural heritage was revised and expanded in the 1980s [Primarily in the UK, see: Hunter, 1996]. First, the definition of cultural heritage began to cover the sphere of the ordinary and everyday life, which made it possible to draw attention to informal practices and objects that are significant for different social groups, i.e. which are not of obvious high cultural significance in the context of national history, but have a value, primarily through personal experiences and emotions [Samuel, 1996; Lumley 2008]. Second, the temporal boundaries of the concept of cultural heritage were widened; this perspective suggests paying attention to objects that are related not only to the distant, but also the recent past [Ashworth et al., 2007]. Finally, cultural heritage came to be understood as a "social action" [Byrne, 2008, p. 149–150] that means replacement of monopolization of experts' right to define and recognize cultural objects as cultural heritage (often at the state level) and to 'give' this right to different social groups. Thus, many places, objects, practices related to history, memory, identity of various social groups—from migrants to music fans—also began to be considered in terms of their cultural significance and, accordingly, as part of cultural heritage. The very concept of cultural heritage, thus, is seen as mediated through a complex network of social institutions, agents and practices.

In France, the concept of heritage played a large role in resonant theoretical discussions on the problem of historical memory and historical politics in the last decades of the 20th century. So, historian Pierre Nora marked the change in the meaning of the concept of *patrimoine* in French dictionaries from "property inherited from father and mother" to "national cultural heritage" during the period from 1970 to 1979 [Nora, 1996]. Thus, Nora argues that living memory as a social practice of families and other groups was replaced by a detached history with its idea of "registering everything." This process is one of the central problems solving within the framework of his project of "memory space." In the 1990s, historian François Hartog developed the idea of regimes of historicity—a concepts of time specificity of a particular era, similar to the orders of discourse proposed by philosopher Michel Foucault [Hartog, 2003]. Along with other forms of "order of

time," Hartog studied the evolution of ideas about heritage and cultural monuments as a result of changes in these regimes—from Antiquity to the modern globalized world. Accordingly, he considered the changes in ideas about heritage in the 1990s in connection with the key problems of modern society, influencing its ideas about itself, its past and future.

Since the 1990s, along with the research projects of Nora and Hartog, the problem of cultural heritage in the French social sciences and the humanities (primarily art history, sociology, ethnography and anthropology) was considered within the framework of interdisciplinary discussions on widening the concept of "historical monument." So, architectural and urban historian Françoise Choay in her work "Allegory of Heritage" (1992) [Choay, 1992] undertook a large-scale history of heritage and cultural monuments not only as part of the history of architecture, but also as part of the history of ideas. This perspective allowed her to trace the close connection of practical use of these concepts with contemporary political, social and aesthetic ideas. Later sociologist Nathalie Heinich proposed a program of sociological research of the "experience of cultural heritage" [Heinich, 2010–2011]. According to Heinich, this experience is based on two factors: a sense of the object's enduring value, connected to the principles of authenticity, antiquity, signification, beauty and rarity, and appropriation of this object by any community. This experience can be formed as a result of the action of a set of political and economic strategies of the so-called "administration of authenticity," carried out obviously by state institutions. These strategies allow us to consider heritage as a social phenomenon and as part of the public sphere. With this view, any community that denotes a place, event, artifact forms its own heritage, comparable in importance to national/state heritage [Heinich, 2009]. A striking example of the successful study of a complex phenomenon of cultural heritage in the framework of ethnological and cultural anthropological approaches could be found in the works of social anthropologist Laurent Sébastien Fournier, dedicated to modern Provencal folk holidays [Fournier, 2004; Fournier et al., 2020].

Since 2012, the inter-university Laboratory for Advanced Research in Creativity, Art and Heritage (Laboratoire d'Excellence Création, Arts et Patrimoines) has become the most important center for interdisciplinary heritage research in France [Laboratoire d'Excellence Création, Arts et Patrimoines]. In 2015, the Laboratory started publishing a research journal *Cahiers du CAP* [Cahiers du CAP]. The Laboratory use an interdisciplinary approach to study the phenomenon of heritage in the most controversial issues of modern society, such as heritage of marginalized groups, heritage and new media, heritage and political activism.

In Germany, revision of heritage was influenced by memory studies and research of traumatic past. The most prominent representatives of this field Jan Assmann and Aleida Assmann

conceptualize heritage and related practices and rhetoric as examples of a broader phenomenon of collective cultural memory—techniques of collective memory and oblivion, commemorative practices, "memorial spaces" [Assmann, 1992; Assmann, 1999; Assmann 2006].

However, the phenomenon of heritage is also considered in a broader cultural and social context, which is not limited to memory studies. Since 2008, a series on interdisciplinary studies of cultural property and cultural heritage has been published on the basis of the University of Göttingen [Göttingen Studies in Cultural Property]. The series is edited by an interdisciplinary group, which includes ethnologists and anthropologists (Regina Bendix, Kilian Bizer, Brigitta Hauser-Schäublin), political scientists (Andreas Busch), legal scholars (Gerald Spindler, Peter-Tobias Stoll), economists (Kilian Bizer). Accordingly, the very phenomenon of cultural value is considered comprehensively, the focus is on the economic, legal and political instruments of its construction [Groth et al., 2015]. This approach helps to trace the practical application of UNESCO conventions by public institutions both in Europe [Bendix et al., 2013] and other regions [Ochoa Jiménez, 2011]. As a result, the tensions between global, national and local levels [Groth, 2012], as well as between top-down state policy and bottom-up initiatives of different social groups [Adell et al., 2015] are problematized.

In Italy, re-conceptualization of cultural heritage (national and world) became the subject of research by a group of lawyers, who also develop interdisciplinary approach, attracting the experience of sociological, historical, anthropological research, especially when studying new legal concepts of heritage, their application at the international, state and local levels [Bortolotto, 2008; Scovazzi et al., 2012; Francioni, 2013]. At the same time, problematic heritage, connected to the periods of unification of Italy, fascist regime, etc., is the subject of discussion by public historians [Noiret et al., 2017]. In 2016, the Association of Italian Public Historians [Associazione Italiana di Public History] was formed. It focuses on a comprehensive discussion of Italian cultural heritage, taking into account the voices of different generations of Italians and different social groups.

The research groups discussed above are in dialogue with each other, which was facilitated by the holding of regular international conferences, as well as the publication of the *International Journal of Heritage Studies* since 1994 [International Journal of Heritage Studies]. Many issues and approaches to understanding and studying heritage, discussed on the pages of the journal, are reflected in the work of state and international organizations. In particular, they directly influenced the concept of *intangible cultural heritage*, enshrined in the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003 [Convention for the Safeguarding of the

Intangible Cultural Heritage], as well as implementation of the Creative Cities program in European Union since 2004 [Creative Cities].

Many issues that were widely discussed within heritage studies have influenced also the development of the UNESCO Memory of the World Program since 1992 [Edmondson et al., 2020]. In the same year, the World Heritage Committee added a new category to the World Heritage Program—*cultural landscapes*, to identify sites of both cultural and natural value. In 2012, this category was expanded to include historic urban landscape, which combines modern and historical architectural and urban design forms with natural and cultural elements. Many places associated with pilgrimage (such as the path of Santiago de Compostela), wars, industrial past are of historical, cultural, social and natural value and are regarded as complex cultural phenomena [Logan et al., 2016].

Critical heritage studies: multiple agency of the heritage

Researches who were described earlier caused fundamental reconceptualization of the cultural heritage. Now it is observed as a testimony of the past as well as a changing social construct. The heritage is not only an object of academic discussions but also a part of popular culture and cultural tourism. Stepan Stureiko notes that "monuments are ceasing to be an antiquity transforming to curiosity, and thus need to be studies in some new way" [Stureiko, 2017, p. 199]. British urban sociologist Gregory Ashwoth characterizes contemporary heritage as a product that changes its shape depending on market needs and consumer demands. He underlines that events, people, associations, monuments, and buildings are observed as resources for the heritage industry [Ashwoth, 1994, p. 13–14].

A new field of *critical heritage studies* that was formed in the 2000–2010s came to be a result of this reconceptualization [Waterton, 2013; Tolia-Kelly et al., 2016]. The Association of Critical Heritage Studies was established in 2012 under the auspices of the Gothenburg University. Its most important aim is creation of the international interdisciplinary network of researchers which is open for the intercultural dialogue [about various groups of the Association members see: Wells, 2017]. The founders of the Association proclaimed the need for a rapprochement between memory studies, public history and researches of communities, tourism, management etc. [2012 Manifesto].Though the researchers of the critical heritage studies follow the works of heritage studies classics (such as David Lowenthal and Françoise Choay), they firstly analyze heritage as social, cultural and political construct, paying most attention to its uses for forming identities,

memory and social hierarchies [Gentry et al., 2019]. Thus the heritage studies research field itself is observed critically: as a part of political and cultural impact that influence both heritage and scholars studying it [Winter, 2013; Witcomb et al. 2013].

The institutionalization of critical heritage studies was also connected to two research and educational projects—the regular seminar (since 2011) and summer school (2012) in the Study programme World Heritage Studies (WHS) of the Cottbus University, Germany [Study programme World Heritage Studies]. The main aim of this programme (as well as of the related research projects [Heritage Studies Series]) is inclusion of anthropology, archeology, architecture, ethnology, ecology and conservation and museum studies in the interdisciplinary field of the heritage studies [Albert et al. 2013]. New approaches borrowed from sociology and cultural studies gave possibility to reconceptualize both cultural and natural heritage in accordance with the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme [Edmondson et al., 2020]. Those ideas are expounded in the Cottbus Declaration on Heritage Studies (2012) [The Cottbus Declaration on Heritage Studies]. Its authors declare holistic approach to heritage, so they underline that practices of heritage interpretation, as well as theoretic methods that are related to the, should be revised. As the Declaration says, the work of researches or guides is a form of Jürgen Habermas' communicative action that is more important than traditional representation of identities. The heritage managers and administrators, working on both national and global leve,l should have similar purposes [Albert et al. 2015; Albert et al. 2017].

The first president of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies was its main theorist Laurajane Smith. Her works, especially "The Uses of Heritage" [Smith, 2006], problematize cultural heritage not as a list of material artefacts from the past that must be conserved and restored but as a *social and cultural process* involving various agents: from public institutions to tourists [Smith, 2006, p. 44–84]. Smith states that hegemonic discourse of heritage influences our thoughts and actions, imposes egalitarian (mostly European) values by ranking expert and amateur (including subaltern) ideas of heritage. She calls it "Authorized Heritage Discourse" (AHD). It proceeds from Nationalism and Liberalism as well as from ideas of authenticity inspired by Romanticism. These ideas provoked escalation of restoring and conserving practices that since the early 20th century are regulated legally. Only elites discussed and produced these practices. In the periods of deep social transformations these form of exclusion gave political sense to the discourses of conservation and restoration [Smith, 2006, p. 11–43]. Smith proclaims that the ADH does not take into account modern expectations and moves the basis of value system to the past. So the values and norms can hardly be discussed. Smith demonstrates that it is the ADH that constructs two basic groups of heritage practices: conserving related to management and development of tourism. The both groups

maintain existing political and social meanings of heritage. Smith and other researchers of critical heritage underline emotional power of heritage: it gets cultural value from the communities that give to it its personal, familiar or collective meanings. Thus the heritage as a process consists of unique experiences and emotions of persons and communities (including subalterns) that create its changing interpretations and uses.

Critical heritage studies problematize role of the heritage discourses (especially AHD) in national and global conserving projects, including UNESCO programmes. They are not satisfied with Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage that pretends to be the final resolution for the heated academic discussions of the 1980–90s. Smith objects that the UNESCO dissonantly tries to unify criteria of the world heritage list and preserve local cultural diversity at the same time. So we can observe strike of two conflicting AHD on the global level, this contradiction also influences state legislations [Smith, 2006, p. 106–112].

Furthermore, critical heritage studies are involved in the general discussions of the humanities and social sciences that is facilitated by their postulated call for constant discussion and revision of the very epistemological foundations of the heritage concept. They investigate heritage in context of posthumanities [Sterling, 2020], try to de-canonize historical museums and their representations of heritage [Ben-Ze'ev et al., 2020] and to analyze changes of AHD when heritage is digitalized [Taylor, 2017].

Nevertheless, the main aim of the critical heritage studies is democratization of heritage and development the idea of *participatory heritage*. It implies renunciation of elitist cultural narratives and drawing attention to the heritage notions and conceptions of subaltern peoples, communities and cultures [Grey et al., 2020]. It can be achieved through reinterpretation of the heritage as an infinite process that includes (often difficult) dialog [Harrison, 2013; Daly et al., 2015].

So we can see that observed studies not only use heritage as an important research instrument that helps to analyze modern cultural, social and political processes but also by its reconceptualization try to construct, reconstruct and discuss identities, social and cultural values in modern societies [Smith, 2006, p. 3].

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