Authenticity and the localness of heritage: emerging perceptions at World Heritage sites in Africa

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Abstract

Cultural heritage in Africa is viewed as a local phenomenon embedded in the rich and diverse Indigenous Knowledge Systems of local communities. It reflects the pioneering spirit and approaches of local communities in defining the localness and character of heritage. However, colonialism almost erased this localness in Africa through advancing the monumentality approach, further reinforced by the World Heritage concept until recent times. To address this issue, the authenticity concept was adopted as a way of restoring the localness and character of cultural heritage. Through this concept, the African cultural heritage provides local perspectives and insights into the discourse on authenticity. Robben Island World Heritage site (South Africa), offers cross-cutting local perspectives and insights on authenticity. This discussion emphasises understanding the dynamics between authenticity and inscription process, obtaining and safeguarding information sources, conservation, sustainable development and heritage curriculums. The paper recommends adopting a progressive and adaptive approach to broaden the concept of authenticity as a continuing process linked to the ever-changing cultural practices at the local, which gives birth to 'current authenticity'. This reinforces the importance of emerging local perspectives on authenticity and local communities in the future implementation of World Heritage in Africa.

Keywords: *Authenticity, localness, conservation, World Heritage, indigenous knowledge.*

Introduction

The 1994 *Nara document on authenticity* was a response to the expanding scope of cultural heritage concerns across the world, in particular for nations where intangible heritage is the foundation of monuments, sites, sacred spaces and landscapes associated with indigenous and descendant communities. The *Nara document* brought about a major shift in the understanding of what heritage is to different people and in different cultural contexts (Taruvinga, 2014). This was a departure from the spirit of the *Venice Charter* of 1964, which heavily emphasised the monumentality of heritage. Such a monumentality approach was not a befitting approach in understanding the localness of heritage, culture and its intangible aspects in continents such as Africa and Asia. The *Venice Charter* had only recognised authenticity as the permitted and restricted reassembling of originals (Jokilehto, 2006). The charter did not allow reconstruction of heritage and this was reinforced by the *Operational Guidelines on the implementation*

of the World Heritage convention, which narrowly defined authenticity as meeting the test of authenticity in design, materials, workmanship and setting. A progressive and relative approach was needed in defining authenticity and its application taking into consideration the different cultures and contexts (Jokilehto, 2006). It is in this context that the Japanese were pressing for the legitimization of their practice of periodic dismantling, rebuilding, repairing and re-assembling of wooden heritage structures (Jokilehto and King, 2000; Stovel, 2008). The adoption of the *Nara document* cannot, therefore, be separated from the effort and influence of the Government of Japan. This approach resonated with Africa, given the centrality of such processes and approaches in how her rich and diverse heritage is identified, maintained and sustained through the dynamic provisions of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, widely applicable to Indigenous and Descendant Communities of Africa (Abungu, 2014; 2016; Chirikure, *et al.* 2015; Jopela, 2016).

The resonance of the *Nara document* with Africa is premised on how it highlights intangible values as the qualifying/assessing mechanism for inscribing sites on the World Heritage list. The *Nara document* recognises that authenticity allows for the defining, assessing and monitoring of cultural heritage in its diversity. The concepts expressed in the *Nara document* is expressed in monuments, sites, cultural landscapes and intangible heritage associated with local communities. There, authenticity is rooted in the specific cultural context of a site. These cultural contexts should be considered accordingly, including determining how authenticity should accommodate change over time in its definition. This aspect was never considered in the original spirit of the *Nara document* (Stovel, 2007) though the idea of 'progressive authenticity' is not completely new (Von Droste and Bertilsson, 1995: 3; Stovel, 2007). Besides, concepts such as 'social-cultural authenticity' were coined, whereby values and significances can only be built up in communication and dialogue with others in society (Jokilehto, 2006). There is a need to ensure that culturally specific and community-defined values are included in determinations of authenticity and integrity for World Heritage properties (Taruvinga, 2014; Jokilehto, 2006).

Evolution of authenticity, World Heritage processes and Africa

Authenticity, defined more simply, refers to how credibly and truthfully the attributes conveying the outstanding universal value of a site are expressed and maintained through time and space (Taruvinga, 2014). Paragraph 79 of the *Operational Guidelines on the implementation of the World Heritage convention* demands that every site inscribed should meet the conditions of authenticity at the time of inscription and during conservation works. The *Nara document* provides the practical basis for examining such conditions at World Heritage properties and this includes form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, spirit and feeling and other internal and external factors (Stovel, 2008). These aspects when applied to the criteria used for inscribing cultural sites, means that the test of authenticity entails qualifying values and the associated attributes (Jokilehto and King, 2000). Closely related to the issue of authenticity, but not the subject of this discussion is integrity, which was added as another qualifying concept for any inscription. Integrity is a measure of the wholeness, completeness and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage and its attributes. This requirement was further elaborated as 'social-functional integrity' that referred to the identification of the functions and processes on which its development over time has been based (Jokilehto, 2012). However, this qualifying role of authenticity as a concept is not limited as culture is ever-evolving. Authenticity cannot be fixed in time and space as cultural practices are in a constant process of change, which equally influences the maintenance, repair and rebuilding/reconstruction of sites as informed by custodians themselves (Jokilehto and King, 2000). Hence, there is a need to remain aligned with such cultural changes.

Authenticity equally plays an important role in the management of cultural heritage (Stovel, 2008). The *Nara document* provides a broader technical framework for analysis and assists in practical decision-making in conservation (Stovel, 2008). Also provides a framework for an understanding of cultural diversity and that this is due to different belief systems, hence the need to respect the wide array of tangible and intangible ways in which these systems express and transmit themselves (Stovel, 2008). The diversity of culture is an irreplaceable source of spiritual and intellectual richness for all humankind (Stovel, 2008; Jokilehto, 2006; Abungu, 2014). Therefore, cultural heritage should be evaluated and managed according to the respective cultures they belong to (Taruvinga, 2014). For a long time, many nomination dossiers continued to use the concept of authenticity to refer to the maintenance of original design, material, setting and workmanship (Jokilehto and King, 2000; Labadi, 2010) without taking into consideration the broad diversity of its manifestation in different geo-contexts (Taruvinga, 2014; Stovel, 2008).

The assessment of these conditions of authenticity is dependent on the degree to which information sources about cultural values may be understood as credible or truthful (Paragraph 80 of the *Operational Guidelines*). Even the *Nara document* considers the credibility and truthfulness of sources such as the physical, written, oral and figurative sources which make it possible to know the nature, specificities, meaning, and history of the cultural landscape as important in the World Heritage processes (*Nara document*). Understanding of these sources of information, concerning original and subsequent characterization of the cultural heritage, and their meaning, is a requisite basis of assessing all aspects of authenticity (Stovel, 2008; Jokilehto and King, 2000). However, judgments about values attributed to cultural properties as well as the credibility of related information sources may differ from culture to culture and even within the same culture, therefore it is not possible to base judgments of values and authenticity within the fixed criteria of World Heritage (Von Droste, 2012).

Application of the concept of authenticity in Africa cannot be discussed without making reference to the workshop on integrity and authenticity held at Great Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe) in 2000 and the Robben Island (South Africa) workshop of 2014. That workshops were broadly discussed authenticity and integrity within the realm of the diversity of African heritage. Both workshops upheld the *Nara document* as a reference document for World Heritage processes and supported its continued use in Africa.

Authenticity and Great Zimbabwe workshop
In specific terms, the Great Zimbabwe workshop in 2000 recommended that the definition of authenticity be broadened in the *Operational Guidelines* on the implementation of the Convention (Saouma, 2000). The workshop also positioned integrity to be considered for application in cultural heritage, in particular, for cultural landscapes, human settlements, cultural routes, sites of technical production and modes of occupation of land (Saouma, 2000: 171). As such, conditions of integrity needed to be broadened to include cultural, religious, customary systems and taboos that characterize and sustain the complete structure and diversity of both natural properties and cultural landscapes (Saouma, 2000). The workshop further recommended the merging of the criterion for cultural and natural properties given the connectedness between the tangible and the intangible in Africa (Saouma, 2000). Also, the workshop recommended the participation of local communities and other stakeholders in conservation as important (Saouma, 2000). For local communities, traditional management systems were considered integral to state-based management systems, hence they needed to be integrated into World Heritage processes (Saouma, 2000). Furthermore, the NARA +20 recommendations, including the Robben Island Workshop to review the *Nara document*, should be seen as an intensification in the application of the *Nara document* to yield better understanding and conservation of cultural heritage in Africa.

The Future: Robben Island Workshop of 2014 and NARA +20

The Africa region, supported by the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF) and Robben Island Museum, engaged the future of the *Nara document* in July 2014 (Cape Town, South Africa). The workshop was held after the Himeji (Japan) meeting of 2013, which noted the weakness associated with the poor integration of local and global values to inform the authenticity and significance of World Heritage sites, the weak assessment of how authenticity can accommodate the evolution of heritage values over time, and challenges associated with assessing the credibility and truthfulness of the sources used in determining authenticity (AWHF, 2014). Furthermore, the Himeji meeting acknowledged the ill-defined roles of experts and local communities in the process and the absence of processes, tools and frameworks enabling community participation in the negotiation of integrated heritage management strategies (AWHF, 2014). Also, the meeting noted the challenge of addressing the relationship between conservation and sustainable development at World Heritage sites (AWHF, 2014). Premised on these observations and recommendations of Himeji: NARA+20, the Robben Island workshop of 2014 was muted. The workshop to review the NARA +20 recommendations was attended by more than 50 African experts under the theme: From Himeji (Japan) to Robben Island (South Africa), the future of *Nara document* in Africa. The workshop reflected on the implementation of the *Nara document* on the African continent, with an emphasis on its impact on the management of sites, how to integrate local and global values in heritage processes, relationship between authenticity and integrity, how to assess the credibility of sources used to determine authenticity, defining role of local communities and how to integrate sustainability in heritage processes (AWHF, 2014).

Recognising that African sites inscribed after 1995 benefited from the *Nara document*, the Robben Island workshop recommended the domestication and adoption of the *Nara document* through amending national heritage legislation in Africa (AWHF, 2014). Such amendments would create synergy between and among local, national and international frameworks to assist with implementation of World Heritage processes. It would also pave the way for the increased role of local communities. To resolve the challenge around the limited application of authenticity principles in conservation, a participatory planning approach involving local communities was recommended, including increasing awareness and training on authenticity in Africa (AWHF, 2014). Such approaches would persuade World Heritage processes to shift away from being fixated with the materiality of heritage sites and begin to reflect an understanding that the physical fabric is sustained by its intangible values and spirituality as defined by respective geo-contexts. Authenticity is 'progressive' as it is a function of changes and evolutions in the values and physical fabric overtime at heritage sites (Jokilehto and King, 2000). Relating to the credibility of sources, participants recommended the acknowledgement and weaving all stakeholders into the conservation processes of World Heritage sites. Furthermore, participants argued that no source should be discredited for academic inconsistency only, as it forms part of the intangible spirit of the site (AWHF, 2014). This included acceptance and validity of multiple and contested claims to heritage sites, hence the recommendation that conflict resolution should be considered a priority in the *Nara document*. Regarding conservation and sustainable development, participants recommended that the latter should be integrated into the World Heritage processes (AWHF, 2014). This included developing early warning mechanisms that will notify of challenges with bad development choices before they become a conservation crisis. Also, the workshop recommended an expanded discussion on the protection of intellectual property of local communities which is at risk of being internationally exploited for specialist knowledge or commercial reasons without the benefits accruing to them.

The NARA+20 adopted the Robben Island Recommendations in its final text, thereby demonstrating the intensifying application of the *Nara document* and the increasing awareness on authenticity in Africa. Based on the above evolution of authenticity and its application in Africa, this paper explores the application of these recommendations using Robben Island World Heritage, located in Cape Town (South Africa), as a case study.

Robben Island World Heritage Site: maximum security prison becoming a heritage site
Robben Island was inscribed as a World Heritage site in 1999 under criteria (iii) and (vi), as a cultural landscape symbolizing the triumph of the human spirit over great adversity. The property is associated with the banishment of traditional leaders, imprisonment of political and common-law prisoners, being a hospital for the unfortunates who were sequestrated as being socially undesirable due to leprosy, and it was also used as a defence line during World War II. There is also marine and underwater heritage at Robben Island, including fauna and flora, in particular the surviving penguin colony and marine species which have resulted in the Island being declared as a Marine Protected Area in 2019. All these landscapes are a testimonial to how the human spirit triumphed over great adversity through time and space (Taruvinga, 2017). In particular, the Island is famously known for its role as a maximum security prison, where Nelson Mandela spent 18 years as a political prisoner. The Island transitioned into a heritage site with the attainment of democracy in South Africa in 1994, and become one of the first post-apartheid national museums. This transition was abrupt, short and fast-tracked by the government through a Committee led by the late Ahmed Kathrada, also a ex-political prisoner at Robben Island. Robben Island Museum became an institution within three months after its conceptual announcement to the public.

MAP SHOWING LOCATION OF ROBBEN ISLAND WORLD HERITAGE SITE AND LEVELS OF SENSITIVITY. *Image: ©Robben Island Museum, 2018.*

In the process of fast-tracked transition, the Department of Correctional Services decanted from the Island. In the process, it removed most of the moveable materials inside the prison among them beds, blankets, cutlery, monitoring equipment, written, visual and audio records, and any other possibly incriminating sources of information. These moveable items could have been collected as part of the Mayibuye Archives collections. What remained in place were the buildings, municipal facilities, spaces and landscapes of memories and the transportation equipment (buses and the historic ferries) used by prisoners during the time on the Island, and the surviving ex-political prisoners who have become the symbols of authenticity. Whatever was moved at the time of transition at Robben Island, including personal items carried off the site by ex-political prisoners themselves, may never be recoverable, unless acquired through research and donation back to the museum. This means part of the sources to test the conditions of authenticity at the site were administratively removed and, in some instances, placed in other prisons, where common-law prisoners from Robben Island were transferred to. Yet at the time of inscription, UNESCO recognised that the authenticity of the island was complete, but this recognition failed to consider the absence of these moveable heritage attributes and their materiality in understanding the site inclusively and holistically.

The question now is how much of the prison attributes, spirit and feeling were either removed, transferred or destroyed during this transitioning period, including reducing the multiple voices of the Island to a single voice of the ed political prisoners through a Reference Group research project? This project witnessed ex-political prisoners being interviewed in groups or spans concerning specific spaces on the Island, which they had interacted with as prisoners. Ex-political prisoners have become the face of the island, and some of them are employed as prison guides and researchers by the museum. Their voices have become popularised and amplified at the expense of other alternative voices, such as those of ex-warders. While ex-political prisoners can authenticate their own experience, they cannot authentic events and processes that used to be the privilege of their warders, neither can they fully express the experiences of their visitors to the Island. What about the stories of the warders and medical practitioners who operated on the Island? How much of this can be recovered or reconstructed for visitor experience through memorialisation and interpretation programmes? For example, does freezing Robben Island 'as it was received from the Department of Correctional Services' by adopting minimal intervention somehow negate the 'multi-layered' authenticity it was inscribed for? As part of mitigating the above, the museum is now recording individual life histories of ex-political prisoners throughout South Africa, before such memories are completely lost and forgotten. This source of information is becoming part of the collections at Mayibuye Archives and informing the memorialisation programme being implemented at the Island. Therefore, it is important that future evaluations of authenticity, in particular for sites of memory and conflict, adopt a broad-based and holistic approach to ensure that all conditions of authenticity are considered, including securing any moveable sources before they are lost. What this means is that to fully meet the conditions of authenticity at Robben Island, sources of information have to be broadened and target audience diversified through inclusive and holistic research covering ex-warders and their families. There is a need to consider that, understanding of the World Heritage site of Robben Island, is a constantly evolving process influenced by the information being currently gathered from these diversified sources.

Authenticity, engagement and involvement of stakeholders
At Robben Island, and from a governance perspective, stakeholder engagement and involvement has transformed over the years with the involvement of ex-political prisoners in the management structures of the site (Taruvinga, 2017). The Robben Island Museum Council,

historically and currently, includes representatives of ex-political prisoners, implying their views and expectations are considered at the highest level of decision making. However, not all the political formations with cadres who served their prison sentences at Robben Island are represented on the Council (Taruvinga, 2017). As mitigation and recently (2016), the museum established an Ex-Political Prisoners Advisory Committee (EPPAC) as a Sub-committee of the Heritage and Education Committee of the museum Council. The Ex-Political Prisoners Advisory Committee assists the museum in protecting, research, conserving and presentation of the site. Thus, the Advisory Committee plays an advisory role in the management of the site, including on matters such as Intellectual Property Rights vested in the life history stories of ex-political prisoners recorded by the museum, succession planning for a new generation of guides who should be able to transmit their social memory and experiences to the public, as well as in improving the tour guide narrative and its delivery (Taruvinga, 2017). The Advisory Committee also supports the navigation of socio-economic benefits available to ex-political prisoners within the ambit of the World Heritage site of Robben Island and other relevant Government departments. However, this empowerment is fraught with other governance issues within the ex-political prisoners constituents as reflected in the national grouping called Ex-Political Prisoners Association and the associated undertones of entitlements based on their political roles. These matters are beyond the responsibility of the museum, but should not be allowed to detract the noble initiative of the Ex-Political Prisoners Advisory Committee.

World Heritage systems should deliberately and formally involve local communities in decision making like demonstrated at Robben Island during the installation of the photovoltaic solar panels in 2016. The installation is part of the strategy to reduce dependency on diesel energy on the Island for environmental reasons (Taruvinga, 2017). The one-hectare photovoltaic solar plant, located in the village precinct of the Island, was subjected to a both Environmental Impact and Heritage Impact Assessments. In the process, ex-political prisoners were consulted in the many planning meetings (Taruvinga, 2017). In the process of endorsing the project, they raised a very important matter relating to how they perceive specific areas on the island concerning their own experiences. The cricket pitch, where the installation is located, has very little memories about their own experiences, as it was used by prison officials and their families, compared to the agricultural landscape which had also been proposed as a location (Taruvinga, 2017). The agricultural landscape was important to them as they practied hydroponic activities in the area and is also at the back of the famous Limestone Quarry site, their university of life. This demonstrates that communities can offer that guidance, thereby collapsing potential areas of conflict between hard science and intangible values. While this is an isolated case, it points to the intensifying view that local communities and traditional custodians of World Heritage sites, such as ex-political prisoners, have perceptions beyond strict science on what is allowed as development or not at World Heritage sites (Taruvinga, 2017).

Issues of authenticity and development at World Heritage sites should not be decided without communities being involved from the conceptual stages of such projects. Communities should not be merely consulted to fulfil the statutory obligations of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) and *Operational Guidelines* of the Convention. If authenticity is dynamic just like local communities who are the creators of the credible and truthful sources of information, it means they have a critical role in retain authenticity and integrity, but at the same time meeting their own needs. At Robben Island, it has become mandatory in the conservation framework of the site to deliberately consult with EPPs on any project proposed for the site (Taruvinga, 2017). What is needed as a matter of urgency is a stakeholder engagement and involvement framework for the site.

PHOTOVOLTAIC SOLAR PANELS. Robben Island World Heritage Site. *Image: ©Pascall Taruvinga, 2018.*

Authenticity and restorations: Blue Stone Quarry Site

The Blue Stone Quarry site, characterised by a stone wall and a quarry hole, is located on the northern shore of Robben Island. The quarry was opened in 1963 as an application of punishment with production for political prisoners incarcerated for fighting against the apartheid governance system (Matenga, 2004). The stone wall was built by these prisoners between 1963 and 1964 (Matenga, 2004). According to ex-political prisoners, the quarry is a symbol of physical, spiritual and mental torture as they were forced to do the same routine daily: marching to the quarry site, pumping water out and subsequently quarrying stones (Matenga, 2004). This was meant to break them physically and spiritually. The wall was a utility to prevent wave-driven seawater from entering the quarry working area, which disrupted production and equally served the authorities the worry and expense of pumping water from the quarry to allow work (Matenga, 2004: 12). From time to time, and as seawater, even at a moderate tide, was easily gaining entry into the quarry, the prisoners were made to build a dyke to separate the sea from the quarry forming the stone wall (Matenga, 2004: 10). This also includes the futility of off-loading sand and grit to buttress the wall only to find it washed away by the waves the following morning, a situation which the warders were also cynically aware of (Matenga, 2004: 10).

BLUE STONE QUARRY SITE. Robben Island World Heritage Site. *Image: ©Matenga Edward, 2019.*

Their physical and spiritual resilience at the site, even against the merciless and ever pounding windy, cold, and rainy weather conditions of the Atlantic oceanic, is a testimony the triumph of the human spirit (Matenga, 2004). The spirituality and physical elements of the quarry site are critical in understanding what the quarry means to ex-political prisoners and how it should be maintained in the contemporary. The importance of Blue Stone Quarry lies in that memories included the first hunger strike at Robben Island was organized in it, in 1966 (Entech,2003; Matenga, 2004). This hunger strike brought the attention of the warders to their welfare as inmates. The quarry was also a place of sharing of information and notes, political education among inmates and songs composed expressing their grievances to the warders (Matenga, 2004; Hart, 2003). These activities were catalysts of solidarity and collective resolve among prisoners (Matenga, 2004). Also, in the process, the prisoners acquired building and masonry skills from their hardship (Matenga 2004).

The Blue Stone Quarry wall was breached by the sea in 2001 and progressively collapsed from less than fifteen metres to the present-day massive collapse almost affecting forty per cent of the wall. The progressive collapse was due to lack of capacity in conservation at Robben Island over the years until recently. In response to the deteriorating situation at

the quarry site, an engineering solution was initially proposed, which demonstrated lack of understanding the significance and authenticity of the wall embedded in its length, width, construction design and techniques, materials and functionality. The engineering solution was going to introduce a concrete wall in the middle and this would be cladded with original stones, thereby extending the size of the original wall by two metres on either side. This would have created a carriageway similar to a single lane road. The engineering solution was supposed to provide a permanent solution without considering the original role and cyclical maintenance of this wall as a form of punishment to break the spirits and physical strength of political prisoners. The proposed engineering solution would have seen the Blue Stone Quarry wall acquiring a new character, very different from the original one.

BLUE STONE QUARRY SITE. Progressive collapse of the wall. *Image: ©Pascall Taruvinga, 2019.*

The current restoration proposal is anchored on respecting the authenticity of the Blue Stone Quarry from many angles and as informed by the experiences of ex-political prisoners who worked there during their incarceration. The restoration project is consistent with conservation principles, in particular retaining the authenticity of the wall concerning its shape, design, structure, materials, intangible processes, look and feel, construction techniques, and the regime of constant maintenance. This is important in retaining the Outstanding Universal Value of the site as guided by the 1972 *World Heritage convention* and the *Nara document.* Individual members of the ex-political prisoners Blue Stone Quarry Reference Group are participating in the restoration project. The existing documentation on their experiences at the site is equally important for verification purposes during the reconstruction. Also, benchmarking exercises with Great Zimbabwe are being done to develop a maintenance framework that would be integrated into the overall Infrastructure and Facilities Management Plan of the World Heritage site of Robben Island.

However, debates are emerging with invariably contrasting positions on the restoration of the Blue Stone Quarry. Firstly, some people are still arguing in favour of the engineering solution because of the impact of climate change despite that the breach was a once-off incident. Besides, there is no baseline data to predict the frequency and occurrence of such breaches by the sea in the future to necessitate permanency. A permanent solution would remove the cyclical maintenance of the Blue Stone Quarry experienced by the ex-political prisoners. Second, others are arguing that restoration based on respecting conservation principles and authenticity of the wall, shall result in increased costs associated with periodic restoration and maintenance works. Again, this is speculative as there is no baseline data to model the possible and time of another breach occurring at the Blue Stone Quarry site and the costs involved in mitigating this challenge if it arises. Third, some people believe that the site should be allowed to progressively collapse, just like some elements of the first prison building at the island or as associated with dry stone walling sites linked to local communities in other parts of Africa (Chirikure, *et al.*, 2015). They argue that as a symbol of hardships endured by ex-political prisoners at the site, this progressive collapse could allow some healing processes to take place. Fourth, and amid these debates, the World Heritage site of Robben Island has decided to dewater the quarrying hole itself using a pump, just like during the prison times, to allow visitors to experience this hardship attribute as part of planned walking and eco-tours. The necessary permits for discharging the water in an environmentally friendly way have already been secured. Despite these varying opinions, the restoration and interpretation of the Blue Stone Quarry site have to reflect the history and the suffering of the ex-political prisoners.

Authenticity, intellectual property rights and ex-political prisoners
Robben Island Museum recognises that the individual stories of ex-political prisoners and other persons associated with them, including family members, friends, and acquaintances are integral to the history of Robben Island. They are also credible and truthful sources of information (RIM, 2017). The recordal and preservation of ex-political prisoners accounts, stories and experiences of their time on Robben Island contribute to the understanding the significance of the World Heritage site (RIM, 2017). Therefore, ex-political prisoners and their individual and collective stories are an integral aspect of the conservation of the site (RIM, 2017). As sources of information, these need to be protected through an Intellectual Property Rights framework. As such, the draft *Policy regulating Intellectual Property Rights between Robben Island Museum and Ex-Political Prisoners* has been developed. The draft Policy is domesticated in recognition of the long life and inseparable relationship between the Island and all ex-political prisoners as the custodians of their own political experience, including their contribution to the broader narrative on the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. However, the intellectual property rights process started years back when the World Heritage site signed a User Agreement with ex-political prisoners covering all materials recorded through the Reference Group Project.

The draft Policy, being finalised together with the ex-political prisoners, provides for the protection, ownership and licensing their intellectual property rights, as well as defines how their recordings are used for exhibitions and tours for the benefit of the public and educational programmes (RIM, 2017). Regarding the exploitation of their recorded stories and other materials in the custody of Robben Island Museum by third parties (e.g. broadcasting stations), whether for commercial or non-commercial purposes, this shall be governed by provisions of this intellectual property rights policy and in a way that will benefit them (RIM, 2017). However, the exploitation of their recorded stories and other materials not in the custody of the Robben Island Museum, by third parties through direct accounts or dealings with them (ex-political prisoners) directly shall not be governed by this Policy to allow them the freedom of negotiating with such parties (RIM, 2017). The draft Policy also provides a

framework for paying and providing incentives to ex-political prisoners and/or associated persons who provide their accounts to the museum at a nominal fee to avoid research ethical issues (RIM, 2017). The draft *Intellectual Property Rights Policy* further provides administrative procedures for any intellectual property infringement, stakeholder role play and how these recorded stories are cared for through the existing Collections Management Framework of Robben Island (RIM, 2017). The *Draft IPR Policy* is a domesticated one recognising the mutually beneficiary relationship between Robben Island Museum and ex-political prisoners. The effectiveness and practicality of this domesticated *Draft Policy* shall be tested in its implementation once it is approved by both parties. Such domestication has the potential of building mutual trust between ex-political prisoners and Robben Island Museum, as well as safeguard these valuable sources of information relating to the experiences of ex-political prisoners.

Product development, entrepreneurship and authenticity
Another interesting development at Robben Island relates to how elements of original materials being removed and disposed of as part of the maintenance regime of the site are treated. The maintenance works at the site generate some unwanted elements of the buildings due to deterioration and replacement exercises. All this is done under compliance permitting in terms of the *National Heritage Resources Act* of 1999 administered by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) and other applicable regulations of the Department of Environmental Affairs. The elements from original materials resulting from scheduled maintenance are subjected to a two-pronged process: analysis as to whether they can be retained as symbolical collections of particular attributes and if considered important, are registered and deposited into Robben Island Museum collections; and second, if they are considered immaterial and not retainable, they are placed under a disposal regime which ends with all such materials being transported to mainland dump sites. In this case, disposal certificates are issued to service providers taking these materials to mainland dump sites. Either way, this process is facilitated by the heritage team of Robben Island in consultation with ex-political prisoners working at the site. The detailed analysis as to whether materials resulting from maintenance work can be retained as collections or disposed is a demonstration of the dynamism that comes with places of memory, where physical/tangible infrastructure forms part of attributes conveying the values of the site.

The above two-pronged analysis creates both opportunities and challenges in handling elements of credible and truthful attributes at the site. The opportunities lie in retaining sources of information by including elements of credible and truthful physical attributes of the site into an expansive collection that could assist in future uses at the site. However, such additions to existing collections come with challenges such as the need for conservation works, extra storage, and documentation, including digitization. All this comes at a cost.

Challenges in dealing with disposed materials have also provided useful lessons at Robben Island, especially in avoiding exploitation of credible and truthful elements for commercial purposes without benefits accruing to ex-political prisoners. The lack of imagination and creativity by heritage institutions can unwittingly benefit the private sector. As part of the island maintenance, old fence from the maximum security prison was rotten and had to be replaced by a new one. The removed fence was destined for a dumpsite on the mainland through disposal process not controlled by the discussed above two-pronged process. In the process of disposing of the fence, a certain individual spotted an opportunity to reuse the wire and requested to be the custodian of the rotten wire (Taruvinga, 2017). Out of the disposed fence, this individual has produced what is now famously known as the Robben Island Jewellery, which has become a high-end product (Taruvinga, 2017). The disposal certificate authenticates the originality and authenticity of the Jewellery as linked to the experience

of ex-political prisoners at the island and makes any legal action futile (Taruvinga, 2017). What could have been creatively used by the World Heritage site of Robben Island to create unique products for tourism in partnership with ex-political prisoners, was lost due to lack of imagination and creativity (Taruvinga, 2017). It would have made a huge difference in the product range offered to the public by Robben Island. As of today, this gem is in the hands of a private company, which has a global reach through an array of marketing platforms (Taruvinga, 2017). It is the authenticity and the name 'Robben Island' and 'association with ex-political prisoners' that is giving the product value on the market (Taruvinga, 2017). Heritage entities should creatively add value to tourism products by deliberately recycling disposable heritage attributes into new products. The connection between these new products and the site is that elements disposed and reused are coming from an authentic source. The symbolic value is embodied in the usable fabric of the attributes considered beyond conservation intervention for new products. Partnerships with the creative individuals and the private sector should not be derailed by treasury regulations as it can place heritage industries in a perpetual mode of financial limitations even for implementing conservation (Taruvinga, 2017).

MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON. Fence disposed during maintenance works.
Image: ©Pascall Taruvinga, 2019.

Having learnt lessons from the above, the World Heritage site of Robben Island and the National Department of Tourism initiated the Memorabilia Craft Centre project, now known as the Unshackled Craft Cooperative. This initiative seeks to diversify products offered to the public using elements of attributes disposed through maintenance works at the site, but at the same time benefiting communities. For this initiative, 15 crafters were recruited from high-density suburbs of Cape Town, including Langa township (known for its role in the struggle against apartheid) and these include three wives of ex-political prisoners too. A training service provider, Cape Craft Design Institute (CCDI), was appointed to impart the

group with product development and entrepreneurship skills through formal training. The CCDI training covered fabric processes, paper and laser cutting (including engraving), mould making, welding, bending and heating, sewing and cutting, sanding and finishing and drilling, punching, tapping, and fastening. The sources of materials will include a combination of commercial products and materials that can be harvested through maintenance works, as well as abundant natural resources permitted for exploitation at the Island. The Mayibuye archives will provide elements for applied uses, for instance, artworks for imaging products such as cups and t-shirts. The type of products that the crafters will produce include Jewellery, beaded products, candles, soap, products made from wire, crochet/knit products, carry bags and three-dimensional artwork. This initiative will adhere to all the copyright issues and branding protocols. A governance arrangement between Robben Island Museum and the crafters is being finalised to institutionalize this empowerment of the local community. Production of these at a full scale is envisaged for October 2019. CCDI has been retained to 'walk' with the crafters in this journey, and their cost is being met by the World Heritage site of Robben Island. The use of elements of attributes generated from conservation works at World Heritage sites is an exploratory phase at Robben Island, and thus requires further processing, especially in safeguarding exploitation of the values and social memory of ex-political prisoners.

Authenticity, digitization and accessing sources of information
Digitization of collections and sites is the foundation of dynamic and resourceful platforms that appeal to diverse stakeholders. Digital dimensions of collections, which are sources of information for assessing conditions of authenticity, have become critical in this era. There is a need to break out of the comfort zone of conservation and traditional approaches, which will witness heritage becoming a catalytic vehicle for robust heritage industries through digital platforms (Taruvinga, 2017). The Mayibuye Archives of Robben Island has begun a massive digitization project for all the collections covering art and artefacts, audio and visual, historical papers and photographic collections relating to ex-political prisoners and donated anti-apartheid materials. This means once digitized, they become accessible to the public on the click of the button, however with inbuilt access controls. The question is how ready are heritage industries in embracing this rapid and revolutionary technology without compromising issues of intellectual property rights, access, distribution and ownership of such digital collections? Some sources of information are so sensitive and not for public consumption, and as such, the selection of materials for digitization should consider these elements. The uplifting of the recordings of ex-political prisoners on digital platforms could easily constitute another source of tension between Robben Island Museum and ex-political prisoners who are always sceptical about their memories being commercialised without them meaningfully gaining anything from it. On the positive side, digitization can prove to be effective alternative storage for sources of information in the face of threats affecting the originals stored in collection facilities. There are many recorded disasters where originals were completely lost without any alternative record, which does affect conservation decision making processes at heritage sites. The advantage of digitization is that scattered information various sources of information is brought to a centralised platform where its easily accessed for decision making. To mitigate risks and threats that affect both physical and cyberspace storages for original and digital collections, Robben Island has developed an Integrated Disaster Risk Plan and an Information Communications Technology strategy for the site. This is important in guiding and supporting good practices in managing the various sources of information critical to the conservation of the site as an archive.

Authenticity, prison guides and visitor experience
The visitor experience at Robben Island is memorable because of ex-political prisoners, once victims of apartheid systems, who are now the storytellers of their social memory. Ex-political prisoners employed by the Robben Island Museum act as guides in the maximum security

prison. In this role, they provide heart-rendering individual and collective narratives of their experiences at Robben Island. However, ex-political prisoners are not getting younger and at some point, they will retire or leave due to natural attrition. Hence, there is a need to consider a succession plan and strategy for the site. As part of succession planning and improving the narrative offered to the public, the Robben Island Museum Council approved the establishment of a special unit called Intergenerational Learning and Memorialisation Unit constituted by ex-political prisoners. This unit will provide a life-long learning experience, promote the recording of narratives and build a new generation of guides. It will also guide the interpretation and memorialisation of the island. The role of ex-political prisoners will be etched in the training and research programmes of the unit.

Discussion: emerging perceptions of authenticity in Africa

Having explored the African perspective on authenticity, including providing a detailed case study of Robben Island, it is important to consider various dimensions relating to authenticity and its application, in particular, the evolving local community perceptions and how these are manifesting, at World Heritage sites in Africa.

Evolving community perceptions and authenticity

While colonialism witnessed the illegal seizure and appropriation of objects from Africa to Europe and the Americas, local communities never stopped their cultural practices. This means that, even though the numerous moveable objects that could be used in verifying and validating authenticity at heritage sites in Africa were externalised, the producers of these objects remained behind. They adapted to new ways of continuing conducting their cultural practices. While the appropriated collections have become premium and highly protected materials in these foreign nations, they are no longer functioning daily in the eyes of the communities from their nations of origin. When viewed in the context of authenticity, such expropriated sources of information and in the absence of intangible processes currently supporting, became the 'past authenticity' given that cultural practices that generated them have continued to function without them and have even developed new and alternative objects for use, thereby creating the 'current authenticity'. The current wave of repatriating objects back to Africa is caught in between this 'past' and 'current' authenticity and it is also devoid of understanding how the functionality of such collections is now perceived by destination nations such as Senegal and Benin. What is being repatriated may no longer be functioning and relevant or necessary in the present practices as culture is dynamic and in a constant mode of change. An emerging case in point is the return of the famous masks to Benin, where the perceived 'colonially impoverished and deprived' local communities are now using plastic masks reinforcing the 'current authenticity' concept. The 'colonially stolen masks' are now irrelevant in the present except for exhibition purposes and confirming legitimacy. These 'past' masks have been handed over to the Museum of Masks in Benin for safekeeping. The return is slowly becoming a political statement from developed nations to appease Africa in the face of mounting pressure for developed nations to return illegally acquired objects. The question is how do we incorporate these current community perceptions in heritage definitions and interpretations, including such fundamental shifts in validating sources of information in meeting the conditions of authenticity? Taking the Benin case, which of the objects (the past or the present) is now relevant to communities and their cultural practices, and how is this going to be interpreted in the context of authenticity? The return of cultural material to Africa is a political move rather than restorative justice to cultural practices that have already moved beyond this painful colonial setback in Africa.

Another case, which also provides a good example of community perceptions pitying themselves against strict conservation principles and approach concerning authenticity is the Kasubi Tombs in Uganda (Kigongo and Reid, 2007; Taruvinga *et al.,* 2013). The Kasubi Tombs were gutted by fire in 2010, thereby attracting the international attention of UNESCO and

promoting the development of a restoration plan based on conservation principles aimed at recovering the tangibility of the site. It is in this context, that the local community refuted the assertion that site had been burnt, because according to their traditions, a spirit cannot be burnt, which implies that the way of authenticating authenticity was still alive and available to be consulted by UNESCO (Taruvinga *et al.,* 2013). This means restoration could be done as instructed by the spirit rather than strict and coded science in conservation relating to the burnt physical elements of the site. The definition and management of heritage should not only be a prerogative of experts, but also for the community in which it is found (Ndoro, 2014). One grey area relates to how possible it is for authenticity to be captured as a continuous process in the World Heritage framework, given that it will still feature strongly in the future of an ever-changing society.

Authenticity, community experiences and wisdom

Heritage is the source and foundation of identity, and this is illustrated through the tangible and intangible attributes which are peculiar to a particular society and its related context. This foundation cannot be universalised through some criterion and scientific parameters. However, universalism is at the centre of the World Heritage concept, implying that authenticity is interpreted in this context. In this process, monumentality was universalised, including how to assess conditions of authenticity for it. The challenge in this process, which needs to be addressed, is how to make global processes such as World Heritage, understand the localness of cultural heritage, including the means of verifying the conditions of authenticity. Rather, universalisation should have been about the good practices of managing heritage without taking away its localness and geo-cultural context. This brings us to the question as to whether we even need authenticity in conservation at all as change over time is real for cultural practices (Ndlovu, 2014). While authenticity promotes the fossilization of heritage by fixation of such to the time of inscription, changing practices have to be fully acknowledged in formal systems of heritage management in Africa. Legislative reviews are still omitting this very important aspect that brings local communities close to their heritage. If this acknowledgement fails, local communities living today cannot interact with the heritage resource in ways that best accommodate their evolving practices and define their interests too at the site (Ndlovu, 2014; Ndoro, 2014). Also, the discussion on authenticity in the 'now' should be more on how best we can define the 'current authenticity' in an ever-changing context. Also, Africa needs to address the major threat to the management of the intangible heritage due to changing trends in knowledge transfer between the old and the young as a result of globalization (Abungu, 2014). In this process, academics cannot become experts on issues of authenticity based on information acquired from these local communities. Local communities need to part of the transfer process. This can be done through an integrated management system that takes into consideration the traditional methods and western ways of heritage conservation, enhanced documentation systems, as well as taking advantage of the wisdom and experiences of the local communities as a capital resource for heritage management.

The *Nara document* remains a cardinal pointer for Africa heritage to express itself, which should be supported by localised initiatives that bring local communities and experts closer to each other. One of them is profiling local languages in heritage discourse. Language as a carrier of heritage, including associated terminologies that are expressive of heritage values and attributes thereby accurately defining the heritage and its dynamic nature. This will assist in avoiding the problematic approach of teaching and explaining authenticity to local communities, but rather involve them in the defining and interpreting authenticity as a dynamic process owned by themselves. The defining of authenticity should move with culture and society rather than remain fixated into the rigid scientific processes of the World Heritage Convention as 'past authenticity'.

Conservation, sustainable development and authenticity
The socio-economic aspirations of ex-political prisoners at Robben Island is a tip of the iceberg on the dire need of heritage to respond to the needs of local communities. While various conferences, workshops and meetings have been held in Africa, including the development of successive position papers on the relationship between conservation and sustainable development, very little practical progress has been made in this area. Decision making is still based on science and the provisions of the *Operational Guidelines on the implementation of the World Heritage convention*. When this matter is considered in the broad picture of resource utilisation, the experiences and wisdom embedded in the Traditional Management Systems of local communities need to be interrogated. These systems constitute the unwritten but "known behaviours and practices that have been experienced, tested and accepted" which "govern human practices and ensure responsible utilization of resources and harmonious co-existence" (Abungu, 2016:9; Mahachi and Kamuhangire, 2008; Mumma, 2002). Through these systems, local communities of Africa propelled the development of complex industries such as the stone quarrying at Great Zimbabwe, mining at Mapungubwe World Heritage site and pottery manufacturing at many other sites without inducing serious environmental impacts (Taruvinga, 2019). If these systems that give birth to means and methods of verifying authenticity are progressive, it means the consideration of conservation, authenticity and development at World Heritage sites should also follow suit. The question is what are the experiences and wisdom of local communities that could be translated into social components of considering authenticity and integrity because of the increasing socio-economic needs at the local level? For instance, the NARA+20 now recommends improved stakeholder engagement, yet this has always been the approach of local communities for centuries. We are recommending what is already happening in society, which we should be part of. Communally binding decisions among local communities were a function of inclusive engagement and involvement as opposed to the statutory permutations governing such processes. Local communities, as custodians of heritage and authenticity itself, should be involved in the decision making processes around conservation and development issues. They should also be involved in determining the add value processes and adaption of original materials generated out of maintenance work into secondary products for consumption by tourists.

Conclusion
The *Nara document*, including the NARA+20 recommendations, continue to find strong resonance with how heritage is viewed, interpreted and managed in Africa. Furthermore, authenticity as a concept remains evolving linked to the non-static nature of society and the associated continuously changing cultural practices, thereby giving birth to the 'current authenticity'. Embracing the plurality of values and cultural diversity as in the current means accepting that authenticity cannot be fixed at a particular time. What remains in the application of the *Nara document* is formally embracing Traditional Management Systems through amending national heritage laws, developing effective stakeholder engagement and involvement frameworks, and deliberately decolonizing heritage curriculums through the direct involvement of local communities. More importantly, there is a need for a further and broader discussion on how authenticity can be effectively applied at sites, places and landscapes of memories, including those sites associated with recent conflicts in the post-democracy such as the genocide sites of Rwanda. These sites are associated with the notion of 'current authenticity'. This requires an adaptive approach between and among hard science, traditional management practices and evolving local community perceptions. In this process, the localness of heritage and its 'current authenticity' makes it rich, diverse and more relevant to society.

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