Editorial: bridging cultural heritage and sustainable development

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Abstract

Purpose – The paper aims to provide an introduction to the new journal, its scope and papers in the inaugural issue.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper introduces the new journal by exploring the normative foundations of cultural heritage management and how this can be used to construct a bridge to processes of sustainable development. In doing so, the rationale is explained for a journal with this specialism, like *JCHMSD*, including potential areas for research. All this then is linked to the theme and respective papers especially selected for the inaugural issue.

Findings – Increasingly the role of cultural heritage in processes of regeneration and sustainable development of cities and regions is being explored, while at the same time the international debate is intensifying as regards a re-orientation of the concept of sustainability and to re-emphasize its meaning in clear and unambiguous terms. In the build-up to the review of the Millennium Development Goals in 2015, the international community by way of UNESCO is promoting the inclusion of culture in the development paradigm.

Originality/value – In providing an overview of the state of debate in the fields of cultural heritage management and sustainable development, the paper is useful to the readers of the journal who are interested but have limited knowledge in these fields. It clarifies the focus to those who wish to submit articles to the journal, as well as highlights some potential areas for research.

Keywords Culture, Heritage, Sustainable development

Paper type Research paper

Setting the scene

"It is the art of conservation management to be able to convince the other stakeholders", wrote Goran Gucic in his insightful little book *Managing Sustainability in Conditions of Change and Unpredictability* (2009), in which he outlined the limitations of classical management structures and tools developed under either nature conservation or cultural heritage approaches when dealing with the extraordinary dynamics in the organically evolved cultural landscape of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park located in the Central Sava River Basin in Croatia. Now the first decade of the new millennium has drawn to a close, in which the balance seems to have tipped dangerously to the negative, the statement and title of his book, with experiences, seem only fitting for our time. With the failure of the Copenhagen climate summit meeting to take decisive action against the imminent impacts of climate change (Gore, 2010), a financial-economic crisis spreading like a bush fire out of control (Levinson, 2010), which in turn has lead to political upheaval in many countries (in particular Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen at the moment of writing), and with widespread food and water scarcity looming (*The Economist*, 2010), not to mention the on-going but mostly silent destruction and depletion of our planet's resources (Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 2010), one tends to wonder what has happened to the bright future

that most people had in mind when celebrating the millennium change? Instead, our contemporary world seems to be held hostage to a permanent state of crisis, a convenient situation for the prophets of the free market who through clever exploitation make billions of dollars on the side (Klein, 2007; Taibbi, 2009).

Everyone knows about old Chinese sayings and there seems to be one that says that every crisis is at the same time an opportunity. The new *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development* (hereinafter *JCHMSD*) will attempt to offer a platform to present and debate, and where needed challenge, the scientific facts behind environmental and societal crises as part of the quest for sustainable development, to elaborate the rationale for and nurture the emergence of opportunities and new ideas in the field of management of cultural heritage assets, and to establish links between the two so that they can be mutually inclusive and reinforcing – and in the process evolve beyond old Chinese sayings, notwithstanding their historical, inspirational and often amusing nature.

The field of inquiry and research is an emerging one, addressing the management of cultural heritage assets, tangible and intangible, and in particular how it can contribute to processes of sustainable development[1]. Relevant articles dealing with the fields of cultural heritage management and sustainable development were found published dispersedly in several scientific journals addressing management, heritage, conservation and/or cultural studies[2]. None of the surveyed scientific journals, however, focused directly on linking the fields of cultural heritage and sustainable development, neither on the role of cultural heritage in the sustainable development process, nor on the impact of development on cultural heritage assets. *JCHMSD* aims to address this and above all, to demonstrate and reinforce the positive role cultural heritage can play, through proper management, in the sustainable development of the human environment – which in return can stimulate and foster the sustainable development of cultural heritage assets.

Cultural heritage management

Cultural heritage encompasses all contemporary demonstrations, when intangible, and past evidences, in the case of tangible artefacts, of human creative activity that are inherited from previous generations and considered by communities, groups or society at large to be of value, and therefore maintained in the present and transmitted to future generations for their benefit. Cultural heritage is important as a source of memory and inspiration, while it contributes to national and local community identity, which is fundamental for sense of place and social cohesion (Communities and Local Government, 2009). Tangible cultural heritage includes monuments, groups of buildings, sites and cultural landscapes [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 1972], while intangible cultural heritage includes the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills of communities and groups, and sometimes individuals, as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith (UNESCO, 2003). In principle cultural heritage is as broad and diverse as the human population groups that have roamed, and still roam the Earth.

When discussing cultural heritage management, it is difficult to understate the role of UNESCO, which in its 66 years of existence has elaborated normative tools on every significant aspect of culture – be it movable or immovable, terrestrial or submerged, tangible or intangible, stand alone or intricately linked with nature. As an integral part of these normative tools, operational actions have been recommended to foster

sustainable use of cultural heritage resources for the betterment of local populations (Van Oers, 2009). Cornerstones in the protection, conservation and management of tangible and intangible cultural heritage comprise the three key conventions of UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity: the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (i.e. the World Heritage Convention), the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (i.e. the Intangible Heritage Convention), the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

The 1972 World Heritage Convention is based on the key principle that all heritage is of importance and should be considered for protection and conservation, while parts of the cultural and natural heritage are of outstanding interest, which therefore need to be preserved as part of the common heritage of mankind as a whole (Preamble). The Recommendation concerning the protection, at national level, of the Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted at the same time as the World Heritage Convention, was effectively the first international document to set out the relationship between the protection and enhancement of monuments and groups of buildings, and the needs of the inhabitants of historic areas of cities. It expanded upon the importance of providing cultural and natural heritage with an active function in the present to facilitate its care-taking into the future. Furthermore, in its Article 5, it recalled that "cultural or natural heritage should comprise not only works of great intrinsic value, but also more modest items that have, with the passage of time, acquired cultural or natural value". Its Article 8 proposed that protection and conservation should be an essential aspect of planning at the national, regional and local levels. As regards the issue of rehabilitation plans affecting historic buildings, the 1972 Recommendation stressed the importance of linking rehabilitation to the surrounding urban context and of consulting local authorities and representatives of residents of the area, thus introducing participatory processes in the management of urban development processes (UNESCO, 1972).

The 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage linked intangible cultural heritage to sustainable development, and recognised the role of multiple layers of identity and other associated, intangible aspects in tangible expressions of cultural heritage. It advocates the consideration of oral traditions and expressions, including language, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, culinary arts and traditional craftsmanship, amongst others, not simply as manifestations from the past, that can be recorded and documented, but to the objective of securing their viability and creative continuity as an essential component of cultural diversity for present and future generations. Recognising the fragility of the intangible cultural heritage faced with processes of globalisation and social transformation, this Convention set out the roles of States Parties in safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage both at national and international levels, including in the establishment of a Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (UNESCO, 2003). The subsequent Yamato Declaration on Integrated Approaches for Safeguarding Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, 2004) promotes linkages between the 1972 World Heritage Convention and the 2003 Intangible Heritage Convention. As a result, under the 1972 World Heritage Convention an increasing number of cultural heritage sites have been recognised for their associative values, and such understanding of the interdependence between intangible and tangible cultural heritage requires innovative, holistic and inclusive approaches to their management and development.

Further to the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (UNESCO, 2001) and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO, 2005), the recognition of the importance of cultural diversity became an essential component in the development and implementation of approaches to manage the social, economic and cultural impacts of globalisation on contemporary cultural expressions, as well as cultural heritage. It is important to note that the 2005 Convention is the only UNESCO normative instrument that addresses the role of culture in sustainable development explicitly. Next to these, a host of related charters, recommendations, memoranda and other instruments have been developed over the past decades, primarily by International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) but also by other governmental organisations and non-governmental organisations, to guide the management of cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2010).

With these broad and manifold expressions of cultural heritage, it becomes evident to narrow the focus in order to strategically position JCHMSD and to be meaningful to the readership. Although natural heritage for instance could be included as well, since an appreciation of nature for its inherent beauty and inspiration is principally a cultural construct, which is also inherited from past generations, JCHMSD will not deal with natural heritage sites. On the contrary, traditional or indigenous practices of heritage management, both cultural and natural, will be welcomed, since this is considered increasingly important with a view to enhancing the sustainability of human activities. Thus, the onus will very much be on the aspect of management, seeking out papers that present different methodological approaches, both quantitative and qualitative, stemming from theory or practice, or both. Particularly welcome will be articles on intangible cultural heritage and its role in promoting and contributing to sustainable development, as well as the sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage, since this is still a largely unexplored territory.

Sustainable development

According to Adams (2006), the idea of sustainability goes back to 1969 when the World Conservation Union (IUCN) adopted its new mandate, which spoke of "the perpetuation and enhancement of the living world – man's natural environment – and the natural resources on which all living things depend", referring to management of "air, water, soils, minerals and living species including man, so as to achieve the highest sustainable quality of life". The theme of sustainability was central to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, in Stockholm (Sweden) in 1972, and subsequently, the concept of sustainable development was mainstreamed by IUCN, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) through the World Conservation Strategy (1980), which emphasised the need to maintain essential ecological processes and life support systems, to preserve genetic diversity and to ensure the sustainable utilisation of species and ecosystems; the Brundtland Report (Brundtland, 1987), which delivered the key message that economic growth without environmental damage was possible and needed in order to allow future generations the means to achieve their own development; the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro that adopted Agenda 21 (United Nations, 1992); and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, which was preceded by the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000 that issued the Millennium Declaration (United Nations, 2000) with the development agenda of the United Nations for the next 15-20 years in the form of eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG), among which was Sustainability.

The 2005 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (United Nations, 2005a), more than 35 years after the notion of sustainability was born, provided a sobering insight into the state of planet Earth and the sustainability of the management of its resources by humankind. In addition to universally negative impacts on the biosphere, as a result of the global human footprint, the level of poverty had not been reduced significantly, while also inequality had grown. In 35 years of development, driven by urbanisation and industrialisation primarily, it seemed that for both the environment and development the targets as concerns sustainability had been missed so far.

In the build-up to the review of the MDG in 2015, the international debate is expected to intensify as regards a re-orientation of the concept of sustainability and to re-emphasise its meaning in clear and unambiguous terms. Moreover, arguments have been put forward to focus on the all-pervasive role of culture as an essential pillar of sustainability, next to the three traditional pillars of the environment, society and the economy (UNESCO, 1996; United Nations, 2005b; Folke, 2006; Nurse, 2007; Raymond *et al.*, 2009). Evans ascertains (2005) "culture is a critical aspect of mediating and articulating community need, as development is planned and takes shape, through culture's potential to empower and animate". As part of this process, for instance, the International Finance Corporation (IFC, part of the World Bank Group) is currently reviewing its Policy on Social and Environmental Sustainability, dating from 2006, and carrying out consultations with a view to ensure more inclusive approaches through the application of a comprehensive set of social and environmental performance standards. At the MDG Summit, which took place in New York from 21-23 September 2010, UNESCO launched an international campaign to promote the inclusion of culture in the development paradigm. An international summit in 2013 is under preparation that aims to consolidate the pivotal role of culture in processes of development and to demonstrate the concrete contribution that culture, its creative industries and cultural heritage make in this field.

The role of the historic built environment in promoting economic growth is now fully acknowledged. Heritage can boost the local and national economy and create jobs by attracting tourists and investment, and providing leisure, recreation and educational facilities (Tweed and Sutherland, 2007; Nijkamp and Riganti, 2008; Communities and Local Government, 2009; English Heritage, 2009). Moreover, the construction and service industries can benefit from its indirect spin-offs… i.e. adding value to the area and properties. Therefore, "Cultural heritage must be understood as part of the larger sphere of socio-cultural processes" (Avrami *et al.*, 2000) and managed in such a way as to "be able to generate real economic and social benefits for their local host communities" (Hampton, 2005). Thus, increasingly the role of cultural heritage in the regeneration and sustainable development of cities and regions is being explored by leading development institutions, among which the World Bank. Since the 1970s, this institution has financed more than 240 operations featuring investment components in cultural heritage, or stand alone operations, for a total of more than US$4 billion. There are currently more than 120 operations under implementation, with a World Bank commitment of more than US$2 billion (World Bank, 2010). The World Bank is often called upon by governments to invest in or around cultural and natural sites which feature on UNESCO's World Heritage List, and are thereby covered by agreements of protection and conservation. To pre-empt confusion and conflicts, the World Bank and UNESCO are in the drafting stage of a Memorandum of Understanding, with the aim of involving UNESCO staff in

the identification of possible investment operations, to ensure coherence and expertise, and Bank staff in UNESCO's advisory and technical work provided to governments.

Hence, the coming five years, and beyond, promise to be extremely exciting in terms of the exchange of ideas and proposals with regard to cultural heritage and its integration into the sustainable development agenda, and *JCHMSD* aims to stay at the forefront of the international discussions and contribute to policy debates, programme design and review, and project implementation, monitoring and assessment. What follows is a fine selection of papers written by some of the most experienced professionals in the business today, shedding a light on the quality *JCHMSD* aims to uphold in the years to come.

Selected papers

When discussing cultural heritage management in relation to sustainable development, arguably the single-most important instrument in this field is the 1972 World Heritage Convention. It has been instrumental in the formulation of aims and goals, the setting of international standards, the elaboration of approaches, and the building up of a coherent system of evaluation, monitoring and periodic reporting, in the field of cultural heritage management. The ratification of this Convention by 187 countries, out of 193 UNESCO Member States, makes this a near universal tool employed around the world, thereby increasing its power and impact. Approaching its 40th anniversary in 2012, it seemed appropriate to devote a large part of this inaugural issue to the conception and development of this invaluable instrument.

UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Culture, Mr Francesco Bandarin, who was Director of the World Heritage Centre from 2000 to 2010, with Dr Jyoti Hosagrahar of Columbia University in New York and Ms Frances Albernaz of the Executive Office of UNESCO's Culture Sector, present a convincing array of arguments in favour of the inclusion of culture in the development paradigm in their paper "Why development needs culture". After a comprehensive overview of key international meetings and agreements related to culture and development, their paper provides badly needed facts and figures to underscore the role of culture, creative industries and cultural heritage in the global, as well as national economy of countries, which is essential to convince decision makers. Moreover, it underscores the notion that a recognition and inclusion of local cultural specificities is essential to devising winning strategies in good development practices. In closing, the paper provides some practical considerations in the running up to the review of the MDG in 2015.

With direct involvement in all matters related to World Heritage since 1977, when he was serving as natural heritage secretary at the first World Heritage Committee session, and more in particular through his establishment of the World Heritage Centre at UNESCO in 1992 to better organise the day-to-day administration of this Convention, Founding Director-Emeritus Prof Dr Bernd von Droste zu Hülshoff provides a sweeping overview of a lifetime of World Heritage activities, drawing mostly on his personal experience and notes. In "The concept of outstanding universal value and its application: from the seven wonders of the ancient world to the 1,000 world heritage places today", he distinguishes several phases of implementation of the Convention, with as perhaps the most interesting aspect his witnessing of its growth and immense success, which has translated in an ever-increasing

workload for everyone involved. As such, he points at the current critical situation whereby the conservation and management of heritage sites is in danger of being overtaken by the need for the conservation and management of the World Heritage system itself.

Prof Dr Christina Cameron, Canada Research Chair on Built Heritage at the University of Montréal, and Dr Mechtild Rössler of the Statutory and Policy Section at UNESCO's World Heritage Centre in Paris, are involved in a research that correlates the historical record, mostly by way of published and archival sources with the oral record, by way of undertaking interviews with the pioneers, who were involved early on in the Convention's work, in order to illuminate and clarify the evolution of the World Heritage system. Their paper on "Voices of the pioneers: UNESCO's World Heritage Convention 1972-2000" presents in particular three interviews with some of the key persons – pioneers indeed – involved in the initial debates and conceptualisation of the World Heritage idea and its Convention: Mr Russell Train, the American environmentalist who is considered the original promoter of the World Heritage concept, as well as two former UNESCO Directors-General, Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow of Senegal and Federico Mayor of Spain, providing for some truly unique and valuable material with fascinating perspectives.

Mr Gustavo Araoz, a conservation architect from the USA, has been at the forefront of the international debates in cultural heritage management for at least 35 years, partially in academia, partially as Executive Director of US-ICOMOS, and currently as President of ICOMOS International. As part of his reform agenda for this Council, he presents the current challenges and a possible way forward in the conservation and management of cultural heritage sites in his paper "Preserving heritage places under a new paradigm". He states that the evolution of the cultural conservation field over two centuries can be read as a continuous attempt to reconcile the conservation of cultural heritage and development. While the conservation doctrine is based on the prevention of change, since change will erode the intrinsic value of cultural heritage, development however evolves all around change, as this is its basic inherent component. The most visible stage where this conflict is being acted out is the World Heritage Convention and he puts forward several innovative ideas and potential research topics to bridge cultural heritage management and sustainable development.

The involvement and accumulated experience of Finnish conservation architect Prof Dr Jukka Jokilehto as regards World Heritage-related matters spans several decades, as he was the World Heritage Advisor to ICOMOS from 2000 to 2006, while before that he was representing ICCROM as Advisory Body to the World Heritage Committee from the early 1981 to 1998. In "World Heritage: observations on decisions related to Cultural Heritage", he takes a critical look at the decision making process that has been followed by the World Heritage Committee over the last three decades with regard to the evaluation and inscription of properties on the World Heritage List. When referring to the important learning processes over this period, for the World Heritage Committee, the Secretariat, the Advisory Bodies and the States Parties concerned, he reveals his true nature as educator (he was active in the ICOMOS Scientific Committee on Training from 1993 to 2002). In discussing several cases where the evaluation and recommendation by the Advisory Bodies was not followed through by the World Heritage Committee, he proposes some improvements to the system, taking into account the role of each stakeholder.

Notes

1. The idea to develop *JCHMSD* was born in 2008, during the International Conference CIB W070 on Facilities Management organised by Prof Edward Finch at Herriot-Watt University in Edinburgh (Scotland).

2. Such as the *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, *International Journal of Architectural Heritage*, *Journal of Cultural Studies*, *International Journal of Cultural Property*, *Journal of Architectural Conservation*, *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, and *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites*, to mention the most relevant ones.

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