

A. Contextualizing Heritage and Site Management

Heritage Management – Committing to Preservation and Facilitation

Theoretical and Practical Considerations

1 The Broad Scope of World Heritage Management

World Heritage Cities (WHCs) can be understood as systems that are part of a greater whole representing complex and constantly transforming modern societies. These systems and subsystems are where the heritage sector dynamically interrelates with transportation, tourism, the wide field of culture with its own intercultural dimensions, migration, and the economy – either locally, nationally or even globally. Altogether they are guided by some invisible hand within a yielding infrastructure.

The 21st century presents many challenges that have become undercurrents in society and, more specifically, WHCs. Even though heritage has proven to be a steady resource for urban development (CHCfE 2015), serious fixes exist due to changes in demographics, social fabric, migration flows, and in wealth and lifestyles – all compounded by continued global warming and climate change. These factors significantly influence urban development in terms of housing demand, traffic density, tourism, not to mention issues concerning sustainable urban management (Deutscher Staedtetag 2019, 4).

It follows that WHCs set an example and take the opportunity to implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As part of the initiative “Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)” UNESCO and other UN organizations have prioritized the educational role of the SDGs (Turner 2017; Lutz/Koch 2017). WHCs are big players in the implementation of the ESD program. Their prestigious designations as UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHSs) provide exceptional opportunities to facilitate sustainable development. Consequently, WHSs are obligated to implement the SDGs and their respective educational program. So far only a few WHCs have accepted this important task in the development of appropriate activities (Deutscher Staedtetag 2019).

Preserving heritage, both tangible or intangible, is undoubtedly the main objective of managing WHSs. At the same time it is difficult to accomplish this task because there are so many other challenges to contend with, such as urban mobility and development, the transformative digitization of society, environmental degradation, pressures from investors and the commercial building industry, not to mention financial constraints. Also, mediating the different objectives and conditions has become increasingly difficult in numerous WHCs, such as Liverpool (Rodwell

2015), Vienna and Salzburg (Luger 2018) to name just a few. This is partially due to the often held views that urban heritage is rigid, unaccommodating to change and inert. However, heritage can significantly shape urban landscapes and gently facilitate change without compromising historic ensembles.

The resilience of urban landscapes can be enhanced through [reflective] design and construction, the use of suitable building materials and the adaption of planning parameters if and when urban heritage becomes a reference point (Ripp/Lukat 2017). Urban heritage can stimulate strong impulses for the economy, particularly within the conservation and building industry (CHCfE 2015). WHSs, and heritage sites in general, can be seen as a locational factor for businesses; as a result they have a positive effect on the economic development of a city, and are themselves resources for economic activity (Deutscher Staedtetag 2019, 7).



Museum of Tomorrow, Rio de Janeiro (© Matthias Ripp)

The World Heritage designation alone has a positive connotation and is a source of pride that enhances the cultural identity of [local] residents. Rebanks Consulting and Trends Business Research conducted a comprehensive study of hundreds of WHSs and identified numerous positive socio-economic effects. The different forms of value created by cultural heritage were also recognized within the project Culture Heritage Counts for Europe in which a holistic four domain approach was used (Rebanks/Trend Business 2010). It became apparent that a World Heritage designation along with the preservation of a WHS proved advantageous to a location by establishing it as a tourist destination and by benefitting the businesses associated with tourism.

2 Theorizing Heritage & Tourism – Setting the Agenda

During the last decade heritage has caught the interest of more and more tourists; this to some extent is thanks to the UNESCO initiatives of promoting WHSs as instruments for intercultural understanding and education. Cultural heritage and cultural memory are “shining stars” in the rapidly growing field of cultural tourism. Today, every third tour contains a cultural component. Cultural and natural treasures form the raw material for high-quality tourism [services] and products. Without these treasures tourism as an industry would stagnate in the world (UNWTO 2018). When tourists visit a historic site, they enter a space that is subject to another time. It connects them to past events that can be located, interpreted and remembered through examination at a symbolic level. The historic site thereby provides a social framework that brings together collective memory and history, generational memory and memory that in a sense configures identity. In the case of World Heritage the tourism product incorporates elements of national or regional character, making WHSs universally recognized as national flag carriers, symbols of national identity and major tourist attractions for a country.

The cultural artefacts of earlier times and generations – such as buildings, monuments and memorials, events, rites, works of art and ways of life – convey cultural memory. They not only keep cultural memory alive but also maintain it beyond the present and into the future (Groebner 2018). The *touristification* of places of remembrance like UNESCO WHSs are, according to Assmann (2014), a new form of cultural memory that makes cultural attractions globally accessible – tourism even takes on a mediatory role. Accordingly, what is remembered as World Heritage and which cultural phenomena from past epochs become cultural memory depends on how society is currently shaped, how the media maintains the memory and how tourism products are marketed. Heritage thereby undergoes re-valuation, finds new anchorages, and when necessary is re-contextualized. In these ways heritage becomes attuned to new realities that allow for the present to be connected [to the past] and experienced [in the here and now]. More importantly, heritage can be recast again and again – a process that ensures its survival (Luger/Wöhler 2008).

The significance of this process becomes apparent especially in historic old towns where there are conflicts of interest. The *quasi-sacralization* of a treasured historic substance protected as a heritage of mankind is of sorts a declared temporal state of emergency. When a structural ensemble is [protectively] frozen in space and time, tension-laden disputes can heat up between conservationists and renovators; here, too, the marketing of local history and culture for tourism plays a significant role. Historic urban landscapes are often considered an antithesis to the modern city, which adapts and subordinates itself to vehicular and pedestrian traffic. However, historic old towns may actually invite a future-oriented view of sustainable development and coexistence, albeit, in some ways, they oppose the

dictates of unleashed mobility as well as the considerations for economic utilitarianism and profit. They form anomalies [within the urban landscape] that allow for contemplation and amusement in the widest sense, or they become multi-purpose, walkable living spaces that shorten the distance between work and leisure. It follows that the preservation of a historic old town also finds its *raison d'être* in social thought, whose significance extends far beyond the attractiveness of the design of an authentic façade or the motivation of preserving a historic site for a touristic experience (Luger/Ferch 2014).



Heritage Tourism Angkor, Cambodia (© Kurt Luger)

In this sense cultural tourism is a powerful medium, since it serves the demands of a postmodern society and acts as an attractive instrument of memorial design (Richards 2018).

Conflicting Objectives – Cultural Heritage and Tourist Marketing

Since 1972, when the World Heritage Convention was adopted, over 1000 examples of humanity's heritage from 161 countries have been inscribed onto the UNESCO World Heritage List. The criteria for inscription address the uniqueness, the historic authenticity and the integrity of an individual property. A property may represent a masterpiece of human creative power or present a significant intersecting point of human values in relation to the development of architecture, technology, urban design and/or landscaping within a cultural period. A property may be unique if not an extraordinary testimony of a cultural tradition of an existing or

lost culture. It may also be an excellent example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble and / or landscape of one or more significant periods in human history. Whatever the case, these indicators are also the “raw material” for touristic products. They all characterize the [inscribed] “instances of human brilliance” in their exceptionalism, beauty, exclusivity and uniqueness – attractive qualities that tourism draws from and depends on in order to flourish commercially.

Nonetheless, there still exists an inherent potential for conflict. Cultural heritage is a fragile, non-renewable resource. Only by protecting it can its exceptional character be preserved for future generations. Even though both tangible and intangible treasures are threatened, it is the tangible – essentially buildings or cultural landscapes – that are given consideration first. Most endangered is the cultural heritage in developing societies (Timothy/Nyaupane 2009). There are manifold reasons for this: tourism, for one, can cause significant disturbance to the cultural fabric – especially uncontrolled tourism development.

Fundamentally, this conflict in objectives has its source in the guiding principle that heritage is to be systematically preserved and transmitted from one generation to the next. World Heritage aims for the largest possible reference group (i.e. all of humanity) and is oriented towards the common good. Tourism, however, is systematically guided by the principle of consumption, and the use of landscapes and resources, and is profit-oriented. This fits in with the postmodern concepts of mobile leisure, individual gratification and experience-oriented monopolization of the world (Luger 2008).



Grand Place, Brussels (© Matthias Ripp)

In reality, the solution to this fundamental conflict of aims and principles can generally be found in quality-oriented cultural tourism. Firstly, a profound contextual examination of the World Heritage in question is needed that establishes a "meaningful experience" (Prentice 2003); and secondly, a tourism policy based on sustainability and the preservation of the given heritage must be put into practice.

Profane Pilgrimage

Whatever the case may be, tourism providers are challenged to walk a tightrope between the requirements of educational mediation and desirable amusement, wherein the [visitor's] experience depends on how well service and communication are synthesized, and the degree to which it is augmented by new information technologies (Egger 2015).

The World Heritage tourist learns, studies and consumes essential aspects of a culture and the embodiments of national identity. Yet tangible cultural heritage is conceptually more complicated to understand and requires a knowledge basis. It reveals bygone societies and the history of humanity. The timelessness of a World Heritage encounter makes it possible for visitors to feel as if they are part of a larger story, a bigger picture. Wöhler (2008) even speaks of a "sacramental experience." Something transcendent is revealed. Accordingly, how one shows proper respect for specific places, memorials, and natural monuments, etc., comes into question, especially when these objects of respect become almost sacred through their up-valuation to World Heritage in a profane society. The history of the human spirit and the manifestations of its virtuosity are thereby deemed highest cultural value, in a sense *sacralized* – this is in contrast to the largely desecralized cosmos of the western world. More importantly this valourization can be shared by all of humanity. Wöhler rightly refers to this as a canonization of spaces. This is how cultural memory is formed: from a diversity of cultural artefacts, certain artefacts are designated memorable. A place, a region, a site is given a permanent code and in this manner its time-transcending significance is enshrined.

Experiencing that which is deemed important also creates its uniqueness. In a sense one becomes attuned to the extraordinary and universal value of World Heritage. Therein also lies a large-scale tourist potential given the great yearning for emotionality and a holistic experience, not to mention the desire to feel one with the world. World Heritage tourists are, in a sense, on a "profane pilgrimage." Experiencing sacralized World Heritage places with one's own senses is reason enough for a tourist to travel thousands of kilometres and climb hundreds of steps. WHSs provide a learning platform where the cultural tourist can share a cultural value-system. One can understand then that the communication goals of the World Heritage Convention will only have been successfully reached when the past is conveyed into the present and is contextually re-invigorated and filled with new meaning.

3 Coping with Success – the Burden of Over-tourism

WHSs are most vulnerable to mass tourism given that their Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) is used as a powerful marketing tool. Annually, WHSs are visited by millions of tourists who are largely oriented towards culture and heritage. The economic impact is huge; then again, this dynamic can have a negative effect on a site. Because of this inherent contradiction that tourism holds, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in Paris has given it greater consideration within heritage management. In 2011, a new UNESCO World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Program was developed to address the reality of many WHSs struggling to deal with mass tourism.



Hands off from Venice! (© Kurt Luger)

During the last decade this topic has made headlines and public disputes in this matter have drawn attention in the media:

“Sinking city: how Venice is managing Europe's worst tourism crisis”(https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2019/apr/30/sinking-city-how-venice-is-managing-europes-worst-tourism-crisis)

“Quebec City residents join global backlash against over-tourism” (https://www.ctvnews.ca/lifestyle/quebec-city-residents-join-global-backlash-against-overtourism-1.4437859?cache=yes%3FclipId%3D104069%3Fot%3DAjaxLayout%3FautoPlay%3Dtrue%3FclipId%3D373266%3FautoPlay%3Dtrue%3FclipId%3D68597%3FautoPlay%3Dtrue%3FautoPlay%3Dtrue%3FautoPlay%3Dtrue%3Dtrue)

“The death of Venice? City’s battles with tourism and flooding reach crisis level.” (https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jan/06/venice-losing-fight-with-tourism-and-flooding)

“How Amsterdam is fighting mass tourism.” (https://www.dw.com/en/how-amsterdam-is-fighting-mass-tourism/a-47806959)

“Has tourism killed Dubrovnik?” (https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/croatia/dubrovnik/articles/dubrovnik-overtourism-2019)

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), which acts as an advisory body to the World Heritage Centre, has also expressed concern about the issue of mass tourism at some sites. At the 19th General Assembly in New Delhi/India this topic was brought up in connection with the Florence Declaration on Cultural Heritage Conservation and Sustainable Tourism for Development. A whole set of measures was agreed upon, including one specifically, the “Regulation to counter over-tourism in historic towns and cities and iconic World Heritage sites” (19GA Agenda item 6–4 Resolutions on other heritage issues; Resolution 19GA 2017/20).

Regulation ultimately has to answer two crucial questions: firstly, how many tourists can a WHS “carry” without harming the quality of the experience or the site itself; and secondly, how many visitors are required for there to be an economic benefit to the stakeholders of a WHS?

In this instance, sustainability might have to be interpreted as finding a long lasting balance between heritage conservation and commercial use within the tourism industry. Although no two WHSs are alike, they all do share the challenge of reconciling the opposing views concerning visitation and conservation. These views can differ greatly depending on the degree to which a WHS is threatened and able to accommodate visitor numbers. This comes down to understanding the carrying capacity of a site.

Defining tangible resource limits (crowding, carrying capacity) is necessary to prevent the overuse and destruction of heritage assets. A hosting population will only have a welcoming attitude towards tourists if limits are kept. This will not only benefit the life of the host but also the experience of the visitor in a touristic place. Yet recent tourist developments and openings of new tourist markets have led to excessive visitor numbers in some places. Residents are suffering from the consequences of these temporary and seasonal tourism peaks. For instance, the reduced access to amenities has brought about permanent changes in their lifestyles and their general well-being. These frustrations can be transferred on to visitors who then leave with a negative experience.

The issues around “over-tourism” are complex; they are heavily laden with emotions because of the harm caused to landscapes, the enormous burden placed on both locals and infrastructure and the pollution generated either physically or visually. McKinsey (2017) identifies five major problems linked to tourist over-crowding: 1.) alienated local residents; 2.) a degraded tourist experience; 3.) an overloaded infrastructure; 4.) damage to nature; 5.) and threats to culture and heritage. Most probably, over-tourism is a side effect of the unprecedented affluence and hyper-mobility of modern day societies. Whereas global travel supply chains may prosper – as in the case of the international cruise ship industry that daily delivers thousands of passengers to ports near historic cities and heritage sites – locals in some places have tourism-phobia because they have to bear the brunt of tourism growth in terms of the rising costs of housing and in real estate speculation. AirBnBs, for example, have been legitimately accused of reducing

housing affordability and displacing residents. Small-sized WHCs suffer the most from these phenomena as cultural tourism naturally focuses on “destinations of desire” like Venice, Dubrovnik, Florence, Bruges, Visby, Amsterdam, Salzburg, Hallstatt and Český Krumlov, to name only a few.

The visual signs of overcrowding due to uncontrolled tourism can be traffic jams, pedestrian congestion in narrow city lanes and an overall suboptimal experience of an, otherwise, high quality tourism product. Managing visitor numbers through strict limits on accessibility to city centres for cars and motor coaches may mitigate the problem. Ever since unbounded individual mobility created a rapidly expanding market for the tourism industry, city administrators and destination managers have quickly learned there are definite limits to this growth. Prioritizing the welfare of local residents over the needs of the global tourism supply chain is vital. Utmost consideration must be given to ensuring visitor numbers do not exceed a destination’s carrying capacity. The tourism industry, too, must realize its responsibility in ensuring product development is balanced between optimal experiences for tourist and commensurate benefits for locals. Similarly, tourists must do their part in making travel choices that are sensitive to the places they visit and the inhabitants who live in and around them. It is apparent that tourism is part of a wider destination management system – in line with the Historic Urban Landscape Approach – that takes into consideration transport and mobility, the preservation of spaces, the local economy and housing, among other aspects of daily life. Needless to say, tourism, when carefully planned and managed, can certainly facilitate the goals of the World Heritage Convention in preserving cultural and natural heritage, maintaining intercultural respect and expressing appreciation.

4 Balancing – A Mitigation Strategy for Problems

Within the framework of the Barcelona Declaration of Tourism and Cultural Heritage (2019) – an outcome of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 – the term “balance” plays a pivotal role in the urban planning process. “In the search for an adequate balance between tourism activities, cultural heritage and impacts on the local community, better management of tourism/culture initiatives is the obvious solution but at the same time it is one of the greatest challenges.” As such, the Declaration acknowledges the complexity of managing tourism/culture initiatives and draws a more sophisticated picture than just balancing visitor expectations and inhabitant needs. The reality is that urban heritage involves a wide variety of stakeholders interested in heritage-related urban management and planning processes and a great number of people are affected, often forming a silent majority. Their concerns or needs also have to be met. Balancing in this case is more than just implementing tools and interventions that address visitor management, restrictions, pricing, diffusion of tourists and signage. It is there to promote a proper code of conduct (City of Regensburg; Ripp 2011, 39).



I live here
(© Kurt Luger)

The most recent, comprehensive interpretation of this concept has been applied to Amsterdam. The program "Stad in Balans" (City in Balance) includes studies in user impact, measures to resolve consequent problems and trials of different policy actions. According to the program manager Claartje van Ette (2018), the studies, measures and trials affirm that tourism is an important economic sector of Amsterdam. In 2015, visitors spent 6.3 billion Euros in the city; from 2005 to 2017 the number of visitors increased from 11 million to 18 million; and the worldwide trend of rapid growth in tourism is predicted to bring more tourists to the cultural centre of the Netherlands. Approximately 10 % of all jobs in the city are tourism related, attested by the wide variety of outstanding museums, shops, restaurants, attractions and other facilities. Although there was broad citizen support for tourism industry growth after the 2008 economic crisis, this changed in 2014 when the economy recovered and the number of visitors began to increase. The invisible tourism burden became more and more visible.



The bikes of Amsterdam (© Kurt Luger)

The problems resulting from the high number of visitors was particularly apparent in the streets around main tourism attractions and the red light district – all of them densely inhabited. Some parts of Amsterdam’s historic city centre with its narrow streets and waterways are simply incapable of dealing with large numbers of people and overcrowding is the result. When local residents increasingly reported that their neighbourhoods were changing and their quality of life was under pressure, the municipal government took action. Unwanted tourist related developments were targeted – ranging from simple nuisances to overcrowding, rude behaviour, shops and services focused only on visitors, and illegal hotels, etc. It was not enough to simply spread visitors across the city or to influence visitor itineraries. A lasting solution needed to be found to tackle the conflicts between different user groups. Wide ranging measures were applied to encourage balanced use of the city; new rules were introduced to regulate or sometimes even prohibit particular kinds of tourist activities and facilities.

The program specifically followed four main strategies. One is to maintain the quality and diversity of stores and facilities. Since 2017 no new tourist shops have been allowed to open in the city centre. The municipality has designated a number of areas, including all popular areas, as exclusionary to any new hotel permits. Private holiday accommodations are allowed, but only to a maximum of four guests up to 30 days a year. Landlords have to also register their property and pay tax on

the respective rental income. This is all in an effort to clamp down on illegal holiday rentals. Visitors, too, have to pay a higher tourist tax. The second strategy is to regulate tourist activities and to reduce nuisances. Corresponding measures include restrictions on certain vehicles (horse-drawn carriages, ricksha taxis, segways etc.), stricter rules for guided tours, and awareness raising campaigns on what is acceptable behaviour for young Dutch and British male visitors. The third strategy is to spread tourists out of the city and across the region. Amsterdam Marketing, accordingly, promotes attractions in the surrounding neighbourhoods, outside of the crowded city centre (Visit Amsterdam, See Holland). Strategy four aims to create more public space in busy areas by redesigning streets and redirecting traffic flows. Motor coaches are to be kept out of the city centre, car free and parking free zones are to be expanded, and the public transportation system is to be noticeably enhanced. Bicycles are to be the main form of transportation along the Gracht, the artificial waterways of the city. These rings of canals, masterpieces of hydraulic engineering, were constructed in the 17th century. Reducing vehicular traffic to mainly bicycles along these waterways allows for greater appreciation of the famous canal-houses; their setting forms an exclusive residential area, which has been inscribed onto the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2010 (Vlaardingerbroek 2016).

These strategies can only be applied when there is open dialogue between a municipal government and various interest groups. In Amsterdam's case, this was made possible by a think tank provision within the "City in Balans" program. It involved residents of different backgrounds and ages from all of Amsterdam's neighbourhoods. It allowed them to share ideas and to find possible solutions to the problems resulting from the impact of tourism. Participants worked together with a special task force from the tourism sector composed of representatives from museums, tourism businesses and the municipality. Their objective was to better coordinate the services and programs of the local cultural institutions and the tourism and hospitality industry. To clearly understand what impact tourism has on the city, a comprehensive process was implemented involving research, permanent monitoring, quantitative data collection (e.g. resident & visitor numbers, job surveys) and qualitative data collection (e.g. the opinions of residents and entrepreneurs). In anticipation of an increasing number of visitors in the future, the City of Amsterdam definitely considers tourism a part of its international character even though there could be negative consequences looming. A renewed balance is therefore required in which residents are given priority and visitors remain welcome (van Ette 2018; Richard/Marques 2018).

As such precedence should not be given to selling the city, or re-making it for tourists, but rather finding new ways of sharing its positive attributes. This idea has specifically been applied to the City of Barcelona's civic codes and regulations for tourist facilities in that they consider tourists as temporary citizens. The Catalan capital is another cultural and heritage hot spot for tourists, but has witnessed

some violent reactions against tour buses and cars. Here, too, a program was set into action to deal with resident grievances. To get a more detailed picture of the state of tourism in the city a public forum was created where the municipality makes all data available to its citizens (e.g. number of visitors, available beds, occupancy rate, and added value created etc.). The aim was to develop a clear understanding of the city – one that is shared among the different groups that use it – and, more importantly, to increase the quality of life of residents. “The Barcelona approach can be seen as an attempt to re-vision the relationship between culture, residents and tourists, and to move to a situation in which all share a proactive and beneficial relationship” (Richards/Marques 2018, 19). This move correlates quite well with the developing debate about the “right to the city” and the notion of citizenship versus consumption. The post-industrial growth of cities has shifted the role of city centres from productive (working class) spaces to consumptive spaces, dominated by the middle class. In recent years, tourism and post-industrial industries, such as finance, have re-valued city centres as productive spaces, with the most visible industry being tourism. Space theorists, like Henry Lefebvre (1993), have provided evidence that cities have always been spaces shared between different groups, and that conflicts have arisen only when space is scarce. Currently, the “right to the city” discourse is being weighed against the “right to tourism.” This is a delicate issue in the context of WHSs, as the right to visit these exquisite places should be considered a human right that is inviolable. However, the “right to tourism” has its limits, especially when the cultural rights of locals, who are being inundated by tourists, are ignored or neglected. A kind of tourism-phobia can appear among residents, which is identified by increased rejection of tourists and hostility towards them – in both instances predominantly irrational.

The on-going public debates around over-tourism and tourism-phobia (Milano 2017) ignore the more diverse and complex conflicts behind the scenes. There are continual controversies about urban development, the quality of life and the commodification of urban space that go beyond the processes of gentrification and resident displacement because of the touristic transformation of inner-city neighbourhoods. At WHSs suffering from over-tourism destination managers and policy makers, fearful of the negative consequences from unregulated tourist numbers, have allowed for Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) to supersede Tourism Marketing Organizations – as what happened in Amsterdam. DMOs have a far broader perspective that can be used in urban planning, zoning and / or public transport system interventions.

Richards/Marques (2018, 26) argue that sharing a city results in a greater cultural dynamic and diversity, more cultural exchange and open contacts between people of different origins, and new connections between locals and temporary residents. Then again, the tendencies to consume culture quickly and easily lead to the simplification and superficial presentation of cultural phenomena. “Without a deeper understanding of the culture around them, mobile populations, and tourists

in particular, will take away their own “fleeting” impressions, but may lack understanding of what they see.”

A broader cultural concept that envisages visitors and locals as the beneficiaries of creative place-making has been implemented in the Dutch city of ‘s-Hertogenbosch. The small provincial city placed itself on the world stage with a program of events themed on the life and works of the medieval painter Hieronymus Bosch, who was born, had worked, and had died in the city. The 500th anniversary of his death provided the catalyst to use the *genius loci* as a brand for the city. Through events, new administrative models, community development programs, innovative housing, new transport solutions and other creative strategies, the city became a cultural tourist destination (Richards/Duif 2019). WHCs with their vast cultural treasures can learn from these networked activities and apply this knowledge to their own programming, thereby enhancing their contribution to urban development.

5 Towards Sustainable Tourism and Development

World Heritage is conceptually a central component of tourism and it accents both sustainable tourism and development. WHSs call for the development of quality standards appropriate to their assets as they are dedicated to all of mankind. In other words, there is a great need for a legal framework that prevents the destruction and / or misuse of the heritage. UNESCO requires that WHSs have management plans and that they be implemented. Moreover, WHSs need to have a clear vision and sound strategies for developing tourism.

Although regulations around preservation and protection are legal preconditions for the responsible use of architectural heritage, there is no guarantee that every stakeholder will comply to them. This is because old towns are highly coveted spaces for value investments and speculation in the real estate market. Many WHSs have shown that legislative protection is not enough. Italy’s most valuable assets from antiquity and the renaissance are suffering from decay; many of France’s heritage sites are for sale; and the United Kingdom’s sites are being divided into “heritage cash cows” and “charity objects” (van Oers 2015). In some cases neither public administrators nor politicians have any valid instruments or official authority to balance – carefully and responsibly – the development and preservation of the most valuable features their communities have (McKercher/du Cros 2002). To effectively deal with this issue, long-term urban plans are required, extending beyond the World Heritage perimeter and buffer zone.



Time slots for Night Watch-visitors (© Kurt Luger)

If there is commitment to the overarching goal of sustainability, it is necessary to develop indicators for appropriate tourism activities with all regional World Heritage participants. What generally happens in tourism, will especially affect the sensitivities of World Heritage and cultural tourism since the long-term preservation of existing heritage is considered priority. Tourism is on a sustainable path when:

- it can exist over the longterm because resources are developed and utilized sparingly;
- it is culturally compatible because it expresses respect for local conventions and rites, renounces commercializing that exploits and adapts to local standards;
- it is socially balanced because the benefits and drawbacks are equally spread, regional disparities are prevented and locals are involved in negotiations and decisions;
- it is ecologically viable because it has the lowest possible impact on the environment, protects biodiversity and promotes environmental awareness;
- it is economically sensible and productive because it profits the local and national economy and is a significant income generator for the local population (Luger 2008).

The United Nations World Trade Organization (UNWTO), in collaboration with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, has developed the concept of sustainability into a program. Its overall objectives fall under the following five areas:

- Integrating sustainable tourism principles into the mechanisms of the World Heritage Convention;
- Strengthening an enabling environment by advocating policies, strategies, frameworks and tools that support sustainable tourism as an important vehicle for protecting and managing cultural and natural heritage of OUV;
- Promoting broad stakeholder engagement in the planning, development and management of sustainable tourism that follows a destination approach to heritage conservation and focuses on empowering local communities;
- Providing World Heritage stakeholders with the capacity and the tools to manage tourism efficiently, responsibly and sustainably based on the local context and needs;
- Promoting quality tourism products and services that encourage responsible behaviour among all stakeholders and foster understanding and appreciation of the concept of OUV and the protection of World Heritage (whc.unesco.org/en/tourism).

A pilot study of the World Nature Forum/Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch and the UNESCO Chair at the University of Salzburg linked tourism and World Heritage with the objective of developing positive synergies that allow for “benchmark learning” in sustainability. It proved the hypothesis that tourism makes a valuable contribution to preserving a WHS when integrated in a comprehensive regional/urban planning instrument aimed at sustainability (World Nature Forum 2012).

6 Changing Contexts – Challenges and Opportunities of Urban World Heritage Sites

The challenges WHSs face and the parameters they find themselves in are fluid and continuously changing. Important parameters when considering European heritage sites include:

- increasing use of sustainable energy
- changing retail structure and retail patterns – due to changes in consumer behaviour,
- changing ownership because of economic forces in the market – owners are often located elsewhere and / or are institutional like in the case of stock funds,
- growing inventories of listed buildings – as in the case of Germany,
- digitalizing within cities – a challenge to preservation efforts,
- threatening trends in historic urban landscapes – for example high rise construction,
- developing new forms of green mobility which call for new infrastructure – often at the edge of historic towns (railways, parkades, bicycle infrastructure, harbours),
- varying political and economic circumstances (Deutscher Staedtetag 2019).

Above and beyond these parameters and challenges, in recent years urban heritage has ranked high on political agenda. The European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 – albeit not as successful as some had hoped – helped raise greater awareness of Europe’s cultural heritage. At present, the European Commission is in the process of mainstreaming culture and cultural heritage across its various initiatives and programs. This process reached a milestone with the European Framework for Cultural Heritage which facilitates a great number of activities that continue to be realized after the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 (https://ec.europa.eu/culture/content/european-framework-action-cultural-heritage_en). In addition to the Commission, other global organizations have also specifically recognized the connection between urban heritage and development (UNESCO 2016). Even so, the existing structures in the preservation sector are still determined by “the authorized heritage discourse,” as Laura Jane Smith (2006) calls it, and are centred around the material aspects of heritage.

Nonetheless, the important role of communities has been recognized in the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention – Council of Europe 2005). Under “Aims of the Convention,” Article 1c reads: “the conservation of cultural heritage and its sustainable use have human development and quality of life as their goal.” In the “Aims,” society is referred to as “constantly evolving,” given that there is “the need to put people and human values at the centre of an enlarged and cross-disciplinary concept of cultural heritage,” and that there is “the need to involve everyone in society in the ongoing process of defining and managing cultural heritage” (Council of Europe 2005). This reformed view has yet to fully establish itself at academic institutions and the same holds true for capacity building activities in the cultural heritage and tourism sectors. However, it definitely has the potential to redefine the relations between tourists, general users and stakeholders in urban heritage sites.

The special requirements for UNESCO WHSs that arise from the World Heritage Convention (UNESCO 1972) and its Operational Guidelines also have the potential, sadly, to complicate site management. A case in point is the requirement of visual integrity; it presents a constant challenge for WHCs, such as Liverpool (Rodwell 2015) and St. Petersburg (Bumbaru et al. 2008). The construction of high-rise buildings in these cities can often harm the OUV and, more specifically, the visual integrity of a site. Infrastructure, such as for transportation, is another common threat to the OUV of WHCs. For example, the construction of the Waldschlösschen Bridge in Dresden resulted in the delisting of the city's World Heritage (Rodwell 2015). Other urban interventions that can be categorized as infrastructural include parkades, railways stations and railway lines and these, too, have the potential to harm the OUV of a site. Currently, infrastructural interventions are the focus of many cities as they shift towards new forms of urban mobility (Bosetti et al. 2014). In order to coordinate the various challenges, threats and changes in urban development, a systemic understanding of a city and its heritage is required.

By applying an integrated approach and the strong coordinating skills of a heritage site manager, different divisions within public administrations can work together towards the benefits of sustainable development. Integrative support is also required for the growing involvement of civil society organizations in heritage-related processes.

The first step is to anchor participation in the heritage-related processes by communicating the heritage values and measures to local communities, stakeholders and other users of the city, including tourists. The task is complex as the means and structures of communication have changed dramatically over the past decade with the meteoric rise of social media and the blurring of roles between message producers and receivers. For WHCs this poses an enormous challenge: their communication and interpretation activities need to be adapted and refined to be much more open and bi-directional. The values of the World Heritage fabric have to be communicated repeatedly anew to address a constantly changing society (demographically and otherwise). Moreover, they need to employ clear narratives that are attractive to the various users and stakeholders.

At the same time, migration, integration and greater cultural diversity are becoming ever so more relevant to WHCs, especially as these factors become topics of climate change. Cities have always been places of long-term immigration and are characterized by a great diversity of cultures and lifestyles. This diversity should be considered opportune and be promoted by various civic institutions (Deutscher Staedtetag 2019,11).

More pressing, now, is the challenge of increased tourist numbers in some WHCs. Because of their general interpretation of the World Heritage Convention, tourism authorities argue that WHSs should be accessible to all. However, on closer look at the original document a slightly different interpretation can be made. The World Heritage Convention holds to its core “identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage” (UNESCO 1972, article 4&5). The term “presentation” does not necessarily imply access for everybody in an unlimited and unregulated way. Furthermore, if “presentation” did imply unlimited tourism and it was compromising the three other objectives (protection, conservation and transmission for future generations), the sustainability of the World Heritage would be under threat. Therefore, limited access for the purpose of safeguarding World Heritage is justifiable and fully in line with UNESCO’s World Heritage Convention. Managing visitor numbers by introducing a time-slot ticketing system is more than reasonable; this system has already long been in place at sites like Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna and the Palace of Versailles outside of Paris. More recently, it has been introduced to Alhambra in Granada, once more to mitigate the mass numbers of tourists. At all of these sites this system ensures a higher quality visitor experience, appropriate to the culturally prestigious World Heritage designation.

Managing urban heritage has become more difficult and complex for local authorities. Because of the ever expanding and changing understanding of urban heritage as a system and process – essentially belonging to local communities (Ripp 2018) – authorities are struggling with it because their administrative divisional structures are still focused on the preservation of historic buildings. To take on a new role in this altered environment requires changes to managerial processes. This new role needs to handle interpretation and participatory activities, integrative and cross-sectoral projects, and cooperation with external partners such as NGOs, educational institutions, the media, etc. The traditional line of thought on preservation kept the heritage asset as its main objective, but now this is being supplanted by the idea that heritage is a resource for urban development and other processes (Vandesande/Van Balen 2016; Blagojevic/Maruna 2017); moreover, current thought holds that heritage preservation of any kind only makes sense when a local community can create cultural, social or economic value from it and benefit accordingly (Council of Europe 2005).

The new role of site managers is difficult to fully define as it involves many aspects of mediation, facilitation, communication, cooperation and project management. Nevertheless, a new and different style of managing is required that sets itself apart from the traditional role played in heritage preservation.

Heritage preservation and management have always been closely associated with political power. Those who define the terms of what heritage is and what it is not are usually those in command. Accordingly, a site manager has an influential position that is also political in nature, and he or she should be aware of the accountability that goes with it.

To fully appreciate urban heritage as a complex system requires professionals who are flexible in understanding and interpreting their job roles. Only then will doors open to a multitude of opportunities that require cooperation, interpretation and development.

7 Conclusion

Managing World Heritage is cross-cutting in function and involves a range of actors including field-related specialists, institutions and networks, not to mention the residents in and around a respective site. The close cooperation of all actors and their involvement in the decision-making processes are indispensable right from the start. These are important to securing the Outstanding Universal Value of a World Heritage designation and to realizing the full potential of a site / World Heritage City. Even though respective residents are to be the primary beneficiaries, a variety of differing interests and demands must be collectively addressed in the pursuit of heritage preservation and sustainable development (Erlewein 2017; Lutz/Koch 2017). This cross-cutting approach is an important principle of the UN's New Urban Agenda (Habitat III) setting the agenda for sustainable urban development (UNESCO 2016).

On-site tasks call for the strong presence of a site manager, whose role is to coordinate, personally and institutionally, all kinds of matters. He or she needs to show leadership in designing and implementing projects and processes ranging from heritage interpretation to stakeholder mediation, each possibly having contesting requirements and interests. He or she must also have an innovative drive to respond to current challenges like climate change or housing shortages and to deal with related issues such as local population growth or migration. Although managing urban heritage involves a variety of tasks, most important is the constant, overarching aim and mission: safeguarding the heritage site.

Inscription onto the World Heritage List would not be possible without the historic urban fabric. As such the processes and activities around preservation are inevitable. Then again, this does not mean, 'nothing can be changed.' Instead, managing a heritage site / city calls for objectives, actions and interventions that acknowledge the heritage as a complex system. Implementing these elements requires flexibility, dedication, an open attitude and a holistic understanding of the processes involved. Failing that, managers will not be able to integrate the various urban actors and agencies.

Specialists from various disciplines who carefully analyze the developments in this interactive field, speak of a thoughtful management of change, which is responsive to the historic environment and to the social and cultural processes that have created it. It is a necessary contribution to sustainability which is considered important not just in guiding decisions about heritage conservation but most of all in providing a long-term holistic framework for interpreting how economic, social, cultural and biological systems fit together (Throsby 2003). The concept of sustainability is recognized as having great potential for "bringing heritage conservation, tourism and economic development into a balanced and constructive relationship" (Loulanski/Loulanski 2011, 843).

Without question it is of utmost importance to valorize heritage; and tourism in World Heritage Cities is the most profitable means to this end. Ensuring in the long run both a positive experience for visitors and a source of income for local residents is site management. Not only is it there to regulate tourist numbers, but also to preserve the authenticity and integrity of a site. It follows that close cooperation between heritage management authorities, business sectors and civil society is obligatory. Site managers have to frame the concept in which market forces can develop for whatever industry – tourism, construction, etc. Of highest relevance, though, is a holistic understanding of urban heritage management that leads towards good governance and contributes to a network of measures for sustainable development.

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