

THE WORLD HERITAGE VS LOCAL COMMUNITY: IDENTIFYING THE SOURCES OF CONFLICTS.

*El Patrimonio Mundial vs Comunidad Local:
La identificación de las fuentes de conflictos.*

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ABSTRACT

The presented work is an essay rather than a scientific dissertation. The author wants to put an impact on the source of conflicts regarding the complex subject of heritage management and conservation in comparison with the local needs and the given context. The paper attempts to show the role of local communities and their cooperation with authorities as well as the effects of such cooperation.

The area of research comprises the problems arising in the field of implementing external rules on the local field, challenges appearing regarding the needs of local communities and the efforts of official authorities trying to implement the principles of the conventions.

The problems arise when local communities display the lack of understanding and do not share the common idea of heritage conservation. This is caused mainly by the decreasing possibilities of comfortable life. The author tries to identify the main and wrongful approaches as 'Gone with the Wind', 'The Prince and The Pauper', 'Heart of Darkness' or 'Scarlet letter'.

The focus will be put to explain what the areas are where a mutual misunderstanding arise and why all parts to the problem present different points of view. What creates a value? Is it a heritage object or maybe the other values need a stronger protection? When the general duty and the need to protect the heritage is regarded as a controversy and when it is considered as a value within a given community? The international public interest in heritage protection is often regarded as an attempt to diminish the sovereign power of the community and provokes severe controversies and tensions.

The major problem envisaged today seems to be the massive and increasing urbanisation and the destruction of the vestiges still existing of traditional cultures, when we consider century urban post-industrial districts of Upper Silesia in Poland, the medieval cities in Western Europe, the traditional nomad Masaya villages in Kenya or the remains of vanished cultures in various regions of Asia. The preferred platform of cooperation between the parts of the conflict includes divergent needs, beliefs and practices of communities and the possible fields of reconciling the abovementioned.

Chosen examples of the best practices considering mutual cooperation will be underlined.

Key Words: world heritage, communities, conservation, cooperation, conflict of values

RESUMEN

El presente trabajo, más que una disertación científica es un ensayo. El autor quiere centrarse en la fuente de los conflictos que se generan en relación al complejo tema de la gestión y preservación del Patrimonio por un lado y las necesidades locales en el contexto dado por otro. El trabajo intenta mostrar el papel de las comunidades locales y su cooperación con las autoridades, así como los efectos de dicha cooperación.

El área de la investigación comprende los problemas que surgen en el ámbito de aplicación de las normas externas al ámbito local, desafíos que se generan en relación con las necesidades de las comunidades locales y los esfuerzos de las autoridades oficiales que tratan de poner en práctica los principios de las convenciones. Los problemas surgen cuando las comunidades locales muestran falta de entendimiento y no comparten la idea común de la preservación del Patrimonio. Principalmente este proceso es causado por el potencial deterioro de la calidad de vida. El autor trata de identificar los enfoques incorrectos principales como: "Lo que el viento se llevó", "El príncipe y el mendigo", "El corazón de las tinieblas" o "La letra escarlata". El tema de referencia es explicar cuáles son las áreas en las que surgen los mutuos malentendidos y por qué las distintas partes presentan diferentes puntos de vista frente a los problemas. ¿Qué genera estos valores? ¿Es un objeto patrimonial o tal vez son otros valores que necesitan una protección más contundente? ¿Cuándo el deber general y la necesidad de proteger el Patrimonio se considera polémica y cuándo se considera como un valor dentro de una comunidad determinada? El interés de la comunidad internacional en la protección del Patrimonio a menudo se considera como un intento que pretende disminuir el poder soberano de la comunidad y provoca controversias y tensiones graves.

El principal problema conceptualizado parece ser hoy día el proceso de urbanización y la destrucción de los vestigios de las culturas tradicionales aún existentes, tanto si tenemos en cuenta áreas urbanas del siglo post-industrial de la Alta Silesia en Polonia, las ciudades medievales de Europa Occidental, los pueblos tradicionales nómadas Masaya en Kenia o lo que quedó de las culturas desaparecidas en varias regiones de Asia. El punto de convergencia en la cooperación entre las partes en el conflicto incluye necesidades divergentes, las creencias y las prácticas de las comunidades y los posibles campos de la conciliación más arriba mencionados. A través de los ejemplos escogidos se presentarán las mejores prácticas en el campo de la mutua cooperación.

Palabras Clave: Patrimonio de la humanidad, comunidades, preservación, cooperación, conflicto de valores

1 INTRODUCTION

Culture is our legacy from the past, the heritage is its most obvious visible part. It is a recognized human value. We are all responsible for our heritage before it is destroyed. The ruined cities and monuments are perishing before our eyes. It seems that nowadays, when so many conventions, charters and the other international or national law provisions are already developed, signed and binding, the heritage protection shall be easier. What are the reasons that it is not? The author's point of view reflects not only the professional research but also her experiences as a tour leader and independent traveller.

Despite numerous existing and binding acts of international law regarding heritage conservation, despite all accessible subsequent legal instruments, we still witness great destruction of heritage and our aim should be to prevent the loss of our current capital for future generations. There is a need to find a sustainable approach to the matters referring both to cultural and citizenship matters. As Herremann underlines, "Sustainability in the field of cultural property is of fundamental importance [...]" and "heritage conservation is a responsibility that should be shared by the host country and its visitors, by local people and the government, by the individual and the community." (Herreman, 2006). His view is shared by the multiple charter conventions and the other provisions, to name only the most obvious ones: the Lausanne Charter (1990), the Budapest Declaration (2002) or the Faro Convention (2005). The last one refers to heritage as a every citizen's right to their heritage and underlines the role of culture and identity as well as the responsibility to respect and take care of other people's heritage. (Wolferstan, Fairclough, 2013)

The common circumstances prove that there are usually more than two parties whose interests should be taken into account as far as the conflict arising on the ground of heritage conservation is concerned. The actors show different approaches, which means that there are many different point of view reflecting the rights of local communities, demands of international audience or the interest of local authorities which does not necessarily reflect the needs of inhabitants. The level of cooperation between the parties to the conflict depends on the understanding of all the diverse needs, beliefs and approach of given community. This is the only way that leads to bridging the gaps and the possible fields of compromise. As the Lausanne Charter points out, "Active participation by the general public must form part of policies for the protection of the archaeological heritage" The situation seems to be clear at least as far as the countries who adopted the Lausanne Charter. In Article 2 among others the Lausanne Charter says: "the archaeological heritage is a fragile and non-renewable cultural resource", "the protection of the archaeological heritage should be integrated into planning policies at international, national, regional and local levels. (...) This is essential

where the heritage of indigenous peoples is involved.” “Parties shall comply with the charters provisions. The Charter points out the need to create international mechanisms for the exchange of information and experience among professionals, underlines the need of mutual international cooperation as the archaeological heritage is the common heritage of all humanity.

2 THE REASONS, WHY?

Why do the communities not care about what can be called their legacy, their culture or their heritage, is the key question that should be answered in order to find the appropriate solutions. In many cases the communities seem not to share the idea and do not undertake proper actions to protect their cultural heritage. Does it mean they do not recognize it as a value? It would be also too simple to claim that it is the lack of proper financing to be blamed for. Probably the modest sources of financing accessible to conservationists are the reason, or maybe the decreasing possibilities of comfortable life for communities generate the attitude of neglect? Very often it is the lack of understanding presented by a local community that leads to the abandonment of proper care and protection of the cultural goods and cultural resources.

We should thoroughly examine the reasons, why any neglect occurs, and in many cases local community would rather let the cultural goods be ruined than be ready to engage in its rescue. In order to bridge the gap between international audience obligations arising on the basis of international law, its expectations and the needs of local communities, their tradition and day to day life we must investigate what would be the best way to comply with the fact that they live in an area considered as protected. There are numerous motives, and mostly any given example of a neglected heritage object is linked with at least two of the observed situations. The author let herself name the different approaches as follows.

2.1 ‘Gone with the wind’

The evidence of the culture is perished already and it is too difficult to retrieve it. Community does not care about the site because they do not perceive the value of what is nearly lost. The artefacts are stolen or destroyed, buildings are being ruined, sites are covered with dust.

Surprisingly, this does not apply to only to the villages lost in the sands of Sahara or the last victims of the unrest in the Middle East. The proofs of such negligence are visible throughout Europe to name only Portuguese, or Georgian cities. (Lisbon, Portugal, fig.1 and inside, Tbilisi, Georgia). Even if the area is recognized by UNESCO, it seems that the fate of certain urban sites is decided. It is also evident that in the countries struggling with economical recession communities are less likely to care about the past.

The great loss of what is called the industrial heritage is still observed in Poland, (fig. 2) though such places sometimes regain their life, for example Wilson's Shaft Gallery, Katowice, Nikiszowiec area, Upper Silesia, Poland. In the 90'ies of 20century the Shaft started being adopted for social purposes and turned into largest private gallery in Poland (Wilson Shaft Gallery, 2014).



Fig.1- Lisbon, Portugal and Tbilisi, Georgia (inside)



Fig. 2 – Wilson Shaft Gallery, Nikiszowiec Area, Upper Silesia, Poland

In the course of the following years the place became a venue used for concerts, festivals, performances, and conferences, and the renovation and restoration led to social revitalization of the surrounding area.

2.2 ‘The Scarlet letter’

An object or heritage site is perceived as non – conforming with the today culture/religion/tradition existing and observed in the country where the objects is found. It belongs to a civilization or culture that existed in a given place before. Therefore the community not only does not perceive it as a valuable part of their culture, the community may see it even as non-complying with their way of life. What is more, sometimes the objects are considered by governing bodies as offensive and abusing the required customs or binding law provisions. When I used this term for the first time working on the hereby paper I was not able to imagine to what extent these words can be true, when applied to the situation that we are facing currently.

A couple of month ago good a example to depict this approach were for example the abandoned remains spread throughout the world in the countries where the current policy does not comply with the worldwide policy considering the protection of culture heritage. These were for example the Roman remains from classic period in Tunisia widely spread throughout all the country (fig. 3), the places of worship in various countries, such as Christian churches in Morocco, or Georgian Orthodox churches in Georgia that were abandoned and ruined because of political reasons.

The most outrageous examples of such approach can be observed nowadays. This was the case of famous Balayan Buddhas (Afghanistan) that were severely damaged (National Geographic, 2010) and there are more recent ones. As New York Times informed already in 2012 regarding the situation in Egypt, “radical Islamists had, in the name of the Muslim aversion to artefacts of paganism, asked President Mohamed Morsi to have the pyramids torn down.” (New York Times, 2012). At present we witness particularly tragic and irreparable loss of the Syrian heritage sites.

While completing this article, the news spread as Islamic State militants have destroyed ruins at the ancient city of Hatra. Such news were reported by Iraqi officials, and repeated by numerous worldwide news agencies to name for the purpose of this article BBC News only. The scale of the damage according the UNESCO world heritage site was still not known while completing the paper. (BBC News, 2015). Only a few days earlier we witnessed in a the video supporting the news (Why is Islamic State destroying Iraq’s history? - Explained in 60 seconds, 2015 , 2015) and displayed on the same website the Islamic State militants

destroying the statues in the museum of Mosul. The news display footage showing militants the destroying objects, which in the video are described as “false idols”. Thus their destruction is justified according to the in religious terms.



Fig. 3 - Roman remains from classic period in Tunis, Tunisia

2.3 ‘Heart of Darkness’

This situation occurs always when heritage site is hardly accessible. Even if the community of indigenous people does recognize its value and identifies with the culture it does not mean that the conservation of this place will be possible. However this is where the problem arises. The indigenous peoples are very aware of the value of the place but for them such location represent additional value. For this creates not only the remain of their culture that they could share with the rest of the world but this is the actually existing and recognized part of their everyday life or, in many cases, a part of their *sacrum*.

If the objects or sites are a part of the sacred, it may mean that the rest of the world, who does not make a part of the society, shall be also excluded from the exact part of their heritage, that objects consist of.



Fig. 4 - "A map" on the way to Ciudad Perdida, Parque National Tayrona, Columbia

In this case the inhabitants of the region often keep the place and knowledge about their culture in secret. This situation can be observed in the Columbian villages on the Caribbean coast. We can find astonishing remains of Tayrona culture on the way leading to Ciudad Perdida (fig.4), and in Parque Tayrona (Columbia). However the region is a tourist destination and the greatest known remains of the city are accessible to some extent to the public, the rest of the site is still covered by the jungle and any information on their ancestors and their culture are not easy to reach. Not only the indigenous people are not prone to share their past with the rest of the world. The fact that the sites are accessible only on foot is not a main problem for it may be the main reason to visit it for anybody who wish to live a great adventure. Generally, in the past the problem was linked with the unstable and unclear political situation in the region.

In this case we envisage the opportunity to protect both the tangible and intangible but we have to persuade the proprietors of the land and the inhabitants that it is worth to cooperate for the common advantage.

2.4 'The Prince and the Pauper'

Some locations are not very fortunate although it may seem they are. Because of the existence of a very well recognized site, the other sites in the surrounding area are neglected or even forgotten and left to be destroyed. The good example

are the Kajuraho temples (India). While the site of the best known temples is being restored and surrounded by parks and tourist facilities, the other temples in the area are just perishing and their remains can be found in the community households. For tourists and anybody sensitive to art objects, artefacts and generally concerned about the heritage preservation it may be shocking that the remains of the still existing less known temples are used as a material for housing or even cowsheds for livestock.

On the other hand, it is exactly the mixture of perishing vestiges of past times and the vivid living village that gives the foreigner the striking notion of how challenging must be the life in that part of the world. (Kajuraho village, Chatarpur District, Madhya Pradesh, India, fot. 5). Can anybody blame the inhabitants of the region that they use for their living what is at their reach? Are we entitled to reproach anybody dealing with the squealing everyday poverty that they do not care about the stones covering their fields? It is clear, that in such cases even the education will not be enough to deal with problem which the lack of care for the cultural heritage. Only sustainable approach to the needs of local communities and their social empowerment can help.



Fig. 5 - Kajuraho village, Chhatarpur District, Madhya Pradesh

3 HOW TO RAISE THE AWARENESS?

Harmonising international principles of heritage conservation with local needs, beliefs, practices and traditions must be a complex undertaking, depending on many factors. There are some good examples showing how to safeguard the perishable and to comply with the different aspects of conservation.

The following choice of examples proves what can be the possible cures to the threats. Community-driven conservation and local empowerment goes with the accordance of the doctrine of 'the integrity of national cultural heritage' (de Visscher, 1935) that for the first time appeared as early as in the 1930s. The doctrine reflects the idea that any conservation and conservation driven activities shall take place in its original location and today is related to the provisions that enable creating the complexes of settlements or zones determining the specified areas of conservation. The best example can be *la loi Malraux* (La loi Malreaux, 1962), binding in France since 1962 which has been recently amended. (La loi Malreaux, 2014). The law in general gives the fiscal benefit (tax reduction) to those who contribute to heritage conservation, the proprietors and those engaged in restoration of buildings in safeguarded area. Needless to say, such encouragement is probably one of the best ways to provide the policy regarding the necessity of heritage conservation in developed countries. The owners either will try to take an advantage of their property or will let it perish if they are not offered any support.

3.1 The law

The ICOMOS Charter also insists for protection and preservation of the heritage to take place in its original context. The shared point of view states that any part of the object or any given object shall not be detached from its source object or of the territory it belongs by historical or cultural means. (Lausanne Charter, 1990). The other good example is The Antiquities Coalition (The Antiquities Coalition official website 2014), the private public partnership, that was founded as a response to what is called cultural terrorism in Egypt. Due to the revolution in January 2011, Egypt was facing the robbery of its treasures, antiquities crime and illicit activity. The Antiquities Coalition agreed on a various initiatives and actions: the first nationwide cultural heritage inventory for all excavated antiquities; training programs for officials at historic sites to provide the physical site protection; ancient records digitization, the scanning of ancient records enabling online accessibility or aerial mapping.

The very important seem to be the last ones: the design and implementation of cultural heritage education programs within major archaeological sites and small business initiatives. As the Antiquities Coalition aim is to promote and create small business development within the heritage sites, they clearly put an impact on the

community involvement. This would allow to create an evident economic purpose and would let the community be engaged and show their commitment. The active involvement of local communities is always indispensable, as far as we try to raise the awareness. All that shall lead to better protection of archaeological sites.

3.2 Examples of best practices

Tourism has always been considered as a steam machine for heritage management. The impact of tourism business is well known and is creating a great deal of national income in many countries. All over the world, wherever tourists appear, the future development of the area around the site and the region can be observed. The Masai villages in Kenya or the traditional villages in Cappadokya in Turkey regain their life and flourish because tourists are willing to experience something different from their usual day-to-day existence. Even if someone would like to blame the shows performed in such places only for touristic purpose, no one can deny that this is the touch of passed times and an encounter with the exotic that many people crave for. The same refers to all the cultural resources, cult objects, all of the tangible and intangible heritage that can be experienced by someone who comes only for this purpose. The economical impact cannot be forgotten.

With no doubt the only way to prevent the aggravating loss either of perishing monuments or endangered species is to persuade the indigenous inhabitants that both, the natural or cultural resources posses their exact and countable material value (fig.6).



Fig. 6 - "Tiger watch", Bhandavgarh National Park, India

The animals living in their natural habitat are a better source of community income than the dead ones killed by the illegal poachers and the historical site accessible for tourists is a way to constant development of the community.

There are communities and numerous places in the world which are an excellent example of the place where the coexistence of well managed cultural resources and community engagement contribute to the welfare of both: the flowering prosperity of inhabitants is strictly connected to the well managed and protected archaeological landscape. There are locations where the long time cultural awareness resulted in exquisite mixture of the past and present. Good examples can be found in Italy where we can experience the time travel visiting multitude of the cities and villages that saved or regained their unique character, to name only example the city of Erice in Sicily or Bergamo (fig. 7).



Fig. 7 - Bergamo, Italy and inside the view on Erice, Sicily, Italy

Recently, a specific type of tourism has been developing – industrial tourism. The buildings, remains of 19th century factories, breweries, mines or warehouses that until recent times were regarded as useless piles of waste, have been offered another life. In countries like Poland they become popular tourist attractions, to name only the Tyskie Brewery in Tychy, or famous Wieliczka Salt Mine. (Poland's official travel website 2014). Some of them are accessible as being

enlisted on heritage records while the other post-industrial sites are adapted for shopping centers, stylish cultural centres etc. (Wilson Shaft Gallery, fig. 2). All the abovementioned is complementary to each other. Cultural goods teamed up with accompanying services would help create jobs and prove that the local development is strictly connected with that what was lately considered as useless.

The tourism, especially cultural tourism is linked with awareness, knowledge and some level of education the tourist must possess. The best way to raise awareness of the past times and therefore encourage heritage protection is certainly to reach the different parties engaged in heritage protection and reach the largest group of audience possible.

3.3 Popular culture

The popular culture (films, reconstruction shows) is certainly one of the means that is widely accessible to anybody interested in it, however it might be regarded as something shallow or inaccurate by professionals. It is undeniable that the information is given in a very simple yet very attractive way. The more attractive way, the better the score would be - if the popular culture represents the high level, proving the serious approach to the subject, the better feedback it would get. Here some of the depictions of given period should be recalled. The movies, television series or documentaries describing some specific times and based upon the historical events are undeniably contributing to our notions of the past. Our common legacy is undoubtedly sustained by depictions of given period in the popular mega productions, to name only the series "Rome", "Tudors", the movies like "Gladiator", "Kingdom of Heaven" or "Braveheart", the documentaries like "The Fall and the Rise of the Empire". Whatever the audience's or the professionals' opinion on the mentioned movies/ TV series would be, the fact is that such representations of the past make history closer to large audience and therefore contribute in arising interest in heritage in general. The mentioned examples shall not be taken as a proof of Eurocentric approach. They are recalled only for the reason that the author is aware of the contents of the mentioned productions and cannot refer to many other productions that were realized worldwide and refer to the history of the other parts of the world.

Even if the stories presented in popular culture are far from being historically accurate, it is undeniable that they create an image, that helps an average spectator discover the fascinating world of the past. It's not a long distance from interest in history to heritage protection. The clear depiction of the past is the best way to arise interest for the specific period of time and the remains that were left. This is also the way that let us reach the people who are indifferent and not very aware of the necessity of heritage protection.

3.4 The light in the dark...

If there are any reasons that would justify the lack of proper care and protection of the objects considered as heritage, maybe it is possible to find the solutions how to overcome the obstacles and contribute to the local empowerment. This is a very challenging approach. Our aim shall be to avoid the inevitable loss of heritage objects, and therefore to protect our common heritage. The actions undertaken by various political entities and completing the all the requirement to be called the “cultural cleansing” shall be condemned and shall never happen again. As stated Irina Bokova, The UNESCO President, (BBC News, 2015) they shall be treated as a as a “war crime”. Only undertaking various actions on different fields can prove conservationists’ efforts to be successful.

It seems, that the constant and lifetime education and rising awareness as far as the mutual value of culture heritage is the only way. This is with the accordance of the provisions of Budapest Declaration (2002). Whatever means shall be used, they will always contribute to the main purpose which is the rise of awareness. Our mutual aim should be to find the way to persuade the indigenous people as well as communities in developed countries that the care of their heritage, cultural or natural, is our common concern. This approach respond to the Budapest declaration, as well as Faro Convention (2005) as applied to European countries. The question arises whether the international community possesses any possibilities, legal or factual to execute the existing provisions that would allow to care for the heritage and equally, that would respect the communities needs.

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