

Valuing Sustainable Development in UNESCO World Heritage Sites

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Outline

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Understanding Sustainable Development

- Sustainable development is defined as

***“meeting the needs of the present generation
without compromising the ability of
future generations to meet their own needs”***

(World Commission on the Environment and Development, 1987: 43)

- Holistic integration of economic, environmental, social and cultural development.

Understanding Sustainable Development (cont'd)

- Whose values, underlying ethics, inform decision making on 'good' and 'bad' development impacts and practices?
- Who has the power and knowledge to decide what's worth preserving for present and future generations?
- How do stakeholder perceptions and values influence actions that may facilitate sustainable transition processes?

Values and valuing ...

- Values can be seen as determining priorities, as internal compasses or as springboards for action resembling moral or ethical imperatives that guide action (Oyserman, 2001)
- Valuing actively attribute specific meanings to nature and/or cultural sites
- May provide 'evidence' that the nation is distinctive.

UNESCO's Outstanding Universal Value

Outstanding Universal Value is the cultural and/or natural significance, which is exceptional enough to transcend national boundaries and to be relevant and important to the global community, both now and in the future.

“The cultural and natural heritage is among the priceless and irreplaceable assets, not only of each nation, but of humanity as a whole. The loss, through deterioration or disappearance, of any of these most prized assets constitutes an impoverishment of the heritage of all the peoples of the world.” (UNESCO, 1972)

Valuing **nature** in the sustainable development of World Heritage sites

Table 1. Protected area values framework.

IUCN Category	Definition	Primary objective	Law and Policy	Values of Nature
1a. Strict Nature Reserve and 1b. Wilderness Areas	Strictly protected areas set aside to protect biodiversity and possibly geological/geomorphical features.	To conserve regionally, nationally or globally outstanding ecosystems, species and/ or geodiversity features.	Legislation and Treaties. National and international policies and treaties. Management mainly for science.	<i>man of nature</i> Human use and impacts are strictly controlled and limited. Nature has intrinsic value. No recreational visitation is allowed.
2. National Park, including Marine Reserves	Large natural or near natural areas set aside to protect large-scale ecological processes and recreation.	To protect natural biodiversity, ecological structure, supporting environmental processes.	Policy development: Setting legal standards, strict monitoring.	<i>man in nature</i> A foundation to protect and promote education. Controlled environmentally and culturally compatible recreation is possible.
3. Natural Monument or Feature	Conservation of specific natural features.	To protect specific outstanding natural features. Many enjoy high visitor value.	Compliance and Watchdog. Legislation and monitoring.	<i>man with nature</i> Recreational visits to pay tribute to specific features. These may involve education.
4. Habitat/Species Management	Protection of particular species or habitats.	To maintain, conserve and restore species and habitats.	Compliance and Intervention. Policy options, litigation, prosecution.	<i>man for nature</i> Bans on killing specific species, habitat management. Recreational activities encouraged.
5. Protected Landscape/ Seascape	The interaction of people and nature over time has produced a distinct area with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value.	To protect and sustain important landscapes/ seascapes and other values created by interactions with humans.	Devolution of control. Monitoring. Traditional management practices, civil suits.	<i>man and nature</i> Co-existence. Protection of distinct areas with a pronounced mandate for sightseeing and recreational activities.
6. Protected Area with sustainable use of natural resources.	Conservation of ecosystems and habitats together with associated cultural values and traditional natural resource management systems.	To protect natural ecosystems and sustainable use when mutually beneficial.	Natural resource management.	<i>man above nature</i> Low-level, non- industrial use of natural resources. Tourism compatible with nature conservation.

(Liburd & Becken, 2017: 5)

Valuing **culture and cultural heritage** in the sustainable development of World Heritage sites

- Culture and cultural heritage are not only immaterial essences and hidden values, but something exchanged through practices and communities between people, things, physical constructions and places
- Culture and cultural heritage belongs to somebody who identifies him/herself with others, things, physical constructions and places
 - Even the entire world!

Valuing **tourism** in the sustainable development of World Heritage sites

- The recognition that **World Heritage Sites are inextricably linked to tourism** calls for sustainable development in order “to manage all resources so that **economic, social** and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining **cultural** integrity, essential **ecological** processes, biological diversity, and life support systems”
(UN World Tourism Organization, 2001).

Valuing **tourism** in the sustainable development of World Heritage sites cont'd

Is tourism a goal?

- A means?
- Or both?



Valuing **Stewardship** with others

- ✓ Neubaum (2013) defines stewardship as “caring and loyal devotion to an organization, institution, or social group” (p. 2)
- ✓ Informal governance is exercised by stewards who care, display loyal devotion and identify with the conservation of World Heritage sites *beyond* own and state interests
- ✓ The concept of stewardship puts **emphasis on the people involved** in conservation efforts, their values and dynamic interrelations (Liburd & Becken, 2017).

Valuing others in World Heritage stewardship

- “To live a good life with and for others in just institutions” (Ricoeur, 1992: 172)
- “Other-regarding ethics” How might I act, and what might we want for the future?
- I propose that stewardship transcends sustainability in its concern with caring for, shaping the interests of, and advancing society.
- It implies taking responsibility for World Heritage and the changing world with others!

Another view on sustainability, WH, integrity

- ✓ Integrity and preservation of culture and nature is a premise for sustainable (tourism) development
 - Why does sustainable development not frame all planning documents?
- ✓ Strengthen local pride and identity based on stewardship, which is imbued by global responsibilities to protect WH sites
- ✓ Memorable experiences *with* our guests
 - Involve tourists and visitors (in sustainability): Don't just give them what you think they want!
- ✓ How can each WH site best support such processes, which takes time, funding and commitment?

Conclusions

- ✓ UNESCO World Heritage is a latent, potentially powerful driver towards more sustainable practices through conservation of nature and culture
- ✓ Understanding the shifting values of nature, culture and tourism in UNESCO World Heritage stewardship reveal potentials for advancing nature conservation, governance mechanisms, and the scientific possibilities for real-world engagement and *collaboration with others*
- ✓ In other words: It is people who care for each other, nature, culture and planet Earth – or not!

Want to know more?

Questions please 😊

