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World Heritage and Cultural Diversity Challenges for University Education

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CONFERENCE CONCEPT

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Konrad-Wachsmann-Allee 1
03046 Cottbus

Organisers

Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus
Faculty 2 Architecture, Civil Engineering and Urban Planning
UNESCO Chair in World Heritage Studies
German Commission for UNESCO

Patrons

UNESCO World Heritage Centre
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Johanna Wanka, Minister for Science, Research and Culture of Brandenburg State

International Conference
World Heritage and Cultural Diversity - Challenges for University Education
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Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus in co-operation with
the German Commission for UNESCO



Background

When the M.A. programme World Heritage Studies was founded at BTU Cottbus in 1999, it was the first programme to place the World Heritage Convention for the protection of the heritage of mankind at the heart of its curriculum. Today, other universities have developed study courses following the example of Cottbus. The integral elements of the World Heritage Studies curriculum in Cottbus were – and are – its broad concept of culture and its focus on cultural and natural diversity. In the past, this interdisciplinary approach has proven to be of value. But now, in the face of new developments at UNESCO, it has proven itself to have been forward-looking.

In these last few years, through the adoption of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), the international community has considerably expanded its understanding as to which cultural goods shall be protected. The Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage has thus received important and necessary support with the addition of these new conventions. Consequently, the concept of culture which is underlying the World Heritage Convention has been broadened. Moreover, new focal points have been formulated and established for the identification of cultural expressions and the nomination of cultural heritage. It is indeed remarkable how constructively the international community has created legal instruments to protect cultural diversity in local, national and regional cultural expressions from the effects of the unifying tendencies of global culture. The World Heritage Convention, too, has been improved by the two new conventions, because new nominations may now be measured against a broader concept of culture.

Cultural institutions are equally affected by the diversity of human life. This is reflected in tangible and intangible life expressions and in the heritage of mankind which should mirror this diversity. Therefore we need to consider how educational institutions and research efforts can adequately respond to these developments. Against this background, BTU Cottbus, its Faculty 2 of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Urban Planning and the UNESCO-Chair in Heritage Studies at BTU Cottbus would like to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the study programme by inviting international experts to discuss the challenges of World Heritage and cultural diversity for university education.

Goals

In real life, cultural diversity has many different aspects. One of the aims of this conference is to discuss how these may be protected by international legal instruments and how such instruments may have an effect upon them. The understanding of culture presented here reaches further than the approaches underlying the conventions. Amongst others, the UN Millennium Declaration shall be used to achieve this goal, because it is one of the most important and forward-looking documents created by the UN. It explicitly reverts to the founding ideas and transports the promotion of the diversity of world cultures into the 21st century.

Another aim is to connect this broad understanding of diversity with existing as well as future World Heritage sites. World Heritage sites are representative expressions of material culture which have been created by human beings. Both aims need to be considered in the nomination categories of World Heritage. It is essential to determine the potential of heritage to contribute to human development. The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention do not identify this potential within the definition of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). This potential for human development most notably lies in the understanding of how humans – from a historical point of view – have shaped their material and immaterial life expressions or how human interventions in material and immaterial culture have created heritage. The conference will explore how this heritage should be evaluated and used today – or respectively, what each and every individual or member of a community associates with heritage.

Taking these goals as a basis for discussion on World Heritage, the World Heritage Studies Programme at Cottbus and other institutions will be critically examined. The changing requirements for university education concerning diversity and World Heritage will be discussed and new perspectives on tuition and research shall be established.

Contents

World Heritage and Diversity

Since the World Heritage Committee's Budapest Declaration of 2002, the call for a better thematic, cultural and geographical balance has been an especially pressing issue. The background for this issue is that around 60 per cent of all heritage sites are located in Europe and North America. For this reason, the distribution of types of heritage sites shows a bias towards monuments and historic old towns. Accordingly, the most frequently applied category for the definition of OUV, namely category (iv), i.e. "be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history" (UNESCO, Basic Texts, 2005, p.52) is primarily monuments. Thus UNESCO World Heritage does not fully recognize mankind's diversity of cultures. Given the abundance of similar types of sites in similar geographic regions with similar historical contexts, one could say that the nomination process for World Heritage results not in diversity, but in a paucity of it.

Therefore the conference shall discuss perspectives on strengthening the diversity of World Heritage and developing new dimensions for the definition of OUV.

When looking at the concept of World Heritage as it is today, it soon becomes clear that the categories of OUV do not fully grasp the diversity of heritage. Therefore it needs to be considered if and how these abstract categories can be amended by further criteria. Equally, we need to consider how the nomination process can take into account the intangible value of World Heritage along with its tangible aspects, so that World Heritage will celebrate people and their creative powers.

This process shall result in a greater acceptance of heritage sites by the local communities where the sites are located. Thus, also new potential for sustainable socio-economic development of the heritage sites shall be created. The fundamental idea of the conference is therefore: How can the cultural, religious, economic and political diversity of human development and their expressions be represented in World Cultural Heritage without resorting to the static structures of monuments?

Diversity of Culture and its Expression

The scientific construct of the diversity of cultures is as old as culture itself. Cultures are never closed systems. Cultures have always formed different subcultures and a diversity of life expressions. Even when autocratic regimes have tried to isolate cultures from the outside world, these cultures have developed inwardly in different ways, progressed and created new material and immaterial expressions. This dynamic is a topic which has not been sufficiently reflected in the discussion about World Heritage and therefore shall be discussed in more detail during this conference.

The expression of cultural diversity plays an integral role in the development of culture itself and is not a phenomenon caused by recent social developments. Cultural diversity originates from the dynamic processes by which cultures move from the past to the present and by which they shape their futures.

Consequently the question occurs how diversity should best be understood and communicated so that people benefit from it. This question refers to the diversity of human cultures, their values and norms. It equally refers to religions and their representations. Diversity has always manifested itself in different styles of music, performance and art. Diversity can also be seen where current living conditions transform into different cultural expressions, such as in today's youth culture.

Diversity – as mentioned above – refers to the heritage of mankind and to how the categories for this heritage must be defined so that geographical, cultural, religious, tangible and intangible diversity can be represented.

The need for an application-oriented interpretation of cultural diversity has to be addressed by international and national UN institutions, such as UNESCO, but also by research institutions. The latter should, in a second step, develop strategic recommendations on how to make cultural diversity usable for human development in a constructive way, and – if necessary – how to put more emphasis on its protection. For these reasons our conference “World Heritage and Cultural Diversity – Challenges for University Education” addresses an important issue that is of immediate concern.

In the context of the Conventions on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) and Protection of World Heritage, there are a number of fundamental questions to be raised and addressed: How can intangible heritage and cultural expressions be protected in dynamically changing

cultures without hampering cultural innovation? Why safeguard intangible heritage? When does support and protection of lifestyles turn into museification of peoples' lives? Where is the line between the protection of culture and turning it into an exotic object? How can traditions be conserved and passed on without becoming static? In other words, what needs to be done to prevent the safeguarding of intangible cultural elements to become counterproductive to the development of diverse practices as well as to cultural innovation?

Political Dimensions

The UN Millennium Declaration and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of 2007 have added important political goals and implementation strategies to the UNESCO conventions of 1972, 2003 and 2005 for the protection of the tangible and intangible heritage of mankind. These declarations establish the right to have diverse life expressions and they suggest action plans for their implementation. These demands need to be applied to the conventions for the safeguarding and conservation of cultural heritage. Moreover, these general goals for human development, formulated by the aforementioned charters, need to be applied to the heritage of humanity as well. This brings about a new framework of conditions for the mediation between World Heritage and cultural diversity. Here lies also the connection to education in general and to university education in particular.

The conference shall discuss if and to which extent new instruments like the UN Millennium Declaration and the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are considered in political practice, e.g. in the nomination or management of heritage sites. The conference shall also discuss whether the newly established demands on various stakeholders have been formulated clearly in national policies. There are grounds to assume that a committee of experts that mainly focuses on tangible heritage may not give appropriate consideration to intangible expressions of history. The criteria for the valorisation of heritage that are based on social norms need to be studied with care. Existing agreements and implementation strategies need to be discussed, reflecting their problems and confronting them with the realities of everyday life. All ten criteria of the Operational Guidelines need to be analysed; an analysis, which examines the definitions of Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity and integrity, and which – if necessary – redefines these concepts. Even though the numerous aspects of diversity and cultural expressions are equally important, this conference will deal only with a selection of topics. The focus will be on those aspects which have been formulated in the context of the UN Charter and the UN General Assembly's Millennium Declaration, but which so far have not been transferred to the safeguarding and sustainable use of World Heritage.

This concerns first of all the interdependencies between religious experiences and secular cultures. Second, the connections between migratory, economic and technological developments and their impacts on cultures shall be addressed. Third, political and legal developments and their consequences on specific cultures will be analysed by examining tangible heritage sites.

Fourth, cultural landscapes will be discussed as the reflection of dynamic interactions between humankind and nature in all its various facets.

In doing so, the conference “World Heritage and Cultural Diversity – Challenges for University Education” traces a line from the historically inherited significance of World Heritage Sites for cultural practices, touching on intangible aspects of their development, to their reassessment for present and future generations.

The topics deriving from these new focal points will be discussed in four panels. **Key words in bold character** indicate topics for possible contributions, the *terms in italics* indicate thematic cross references between the panels:

	Panel 1 Interdependences of Cultural and Religious Diversity	Panel 2 Economic and Technological Dynamics through Migration	Panel 3 Politics and (In) Justice in Relation to World Heritage	Panel 4 Cultural Landscapes
<i>"Bodies"</i>	Rituals / song	Oral / visual cultures	Property rights / restitution / Human Rights	Indigenous interpretations of Cultural Landscapes
<i>"Sites"</i>	Sites / places formed by religion	Centres of technological and media revolutions (book printing, digital revolution)	Auschwitz / Robben Island	Urban and industrial landscapes
<i>"Routes"</i>	Pilgrim routes	Trade routes / sea routes / railroads	Slave routes	Landscapes used by nomadic populations
<i>"Streams"</i>	Crusades	Diffusion of innovations through migration	Flight / displacement / exile	River landscapes
<i>"Spaces"</i>	Tolerance and diversity	Cultural spaces influenced by writing	Conflict and post- conflict spaces	Organic and planned Cultural Landscapes
<i>"Webs"</i>	Religious networks	Globalised networks	Criminal networks	Agro-industrial landscapes, (post-) mining landscapes

Details on the individual panels:

Panel 1: Interdependences of Cultural and Religious Diversity – Tolerance and Oppression in the Course of History

In this panel the existing nomination practices for World Heritage inscription will be confronted with the diversity of cultural and religious expressions, which are cutting across time and space. It will be discussed if and how the criteria for Outstanding Universal Value should be amended so that they also include intangible cultural expressions. The panel will also discuss historically emerged religious practices. This shall include rituals and customs, prayer and song that serve cultural necessities and are still practiced today, but which in the context of the nomination practice have not been sufficiently accounted for.

While pilgrim routes such as the *Camino de Santiago* (St. James Way) are represented on the World Heritage List, it must be analysed whether this sufficiently emphasises the historically and culturally grown diversity of humanity. Whether or not the routes of the knightly orders and their crusades should also be represented on the World Heritage List needs to be considered; and if yes, how. These military orders of the Knights Templar or the Teutonic Order caused drastic change and were responsible for far-reaching (inter)cultural developments. The discussion in this panel shall consider the current criteria of the World Heritage Convention as well as the directives of the 2003 Convention.

Panel 2: Economic and Technological Dynamics through Migration and its Impacts on Cultural Diversity

Whether they are motivated by “free“ choice to act on a supra-national scale, or whether they are forced to leave their countries due to economic hardship, people who move and leave their natural environment, do not only change themselves, but they also change their surroundings. This is true for their old ones as well as the new ones. In particular, temporary migrants who return to their home cultures after years of travel and exposure to foreign cultures, contribute very much to the diversification of cultural expressions. They add new knowledge to an existing culture of knowledge and learn new things themselves. They multiply knowledge and transform cultures. Such transformed or hybrid expressions show clearly cultural diversity and cultural change and can be frequently found at trade and sea routes. They manifest themselves equally in the emergence and decline of different means and locations of transport, such as the railroad. These have so far been only included in the discussion on the diversity of the heritage of mankind to a very minor degree, for example in the case of the Silk Road.

Through migration, technological innovations find their way to new regions where they are adapted in ways specific to each region. This is expressed in cultural shifts such as the shift from visual culture to oral culture, from oral culture to print or typographic culture and from print culture back again to the visual culture of the 20th and 21st century. These changes leave behind various traces which must be treated as cultural expressions of Outstanding Universal Value.

Even though migration is both an old and new topic – and even though there are many reasons for a discussion on migration in the context of diversity and heritage – the consequences of global involuntary and voluntary migration on the nomination of World Heritage properties and on expressions of cultural diversity have only been analyzed to a very small degree. This most notably concerns the expressions of migrants in their home as well as their destination countries.

On the one hand, migration movements enable and sustain the diversification of cultural expressions. In many immigrant cities, new “cross-over-cultures” have come into being. On the other hand, the risk of migrants losing their cultural identity is growing, because traditions are no longer cultivated and developed. Besides that, there is the danger of a global cultural mainstream which threatens local, regional and national traditions. The topics deriving from the various connections of migration and cultural diversity will be discussed in this panel as well as their applicability to university education.

Panel 3: Politics and (In) Justice in Relation to World Heritage

The panel discusses the representation of oppression and resistance at World Heritage sites such as Auschwitz, Robben Island or Warsaw. The panel shall examine, whether the injustice people suffered in criminal political systems like Nazism, Stalinism, Apartheid or other dictatorships may lead to both a rational and emotional understanding of this injustice. The panel has the goal to elaborate strategies by which human agony may be presented at this type of World Heritage sites and how this may lead visitors to actively support human rights.

But this panel also deals with the right to existence and cultural expression of minorities in majority cultures as they have developed through diverse historical processes. For example in Europe, the culture of the Sinti and Romanies is still discriminated against by the respective national mainstream cultures. The slave routes in Africa, across the oceans to the respective destinations in slaveholder societies equally give a glimpse of the history and the cultural consequences of this process which presents an uncomfortable World Heritage.

Panel 4: Cultural Landscapes as Reflections of the Dynamic Interaction between Humans and Nature

This panel will discuss the diversity of heritage in cultural landscapes. The category of cultural landscapes was first discussed in 1992, and since 1994, more and more cultural landscapes have been listed as World Heritage sites. The forms of cultural landscapes range from landscapes that were designed by people for aesthetic reasons and landscapes that have organically developed, to associative landscapes. Excluded from the concept of cultural landscapes are landscapes formed by industries and industrial society, such as the post-mining landscape in Lower Lusatia (Germany), but particularly this type of landscape allows an especially deep understanding of the different layers of cultural diversity.

An innovative discussion on the changes of landscapes needs to take into account the economically motivated industrial and technological use of landscapes. It may be that socio-cultural development and change – as well as their economic potentials – play a role in the definition of OUV of agricultural landscapes, such as in the Wachau (Austria), or that mining has changed whole regions including the circumstances of its respective populations, as in Lusatia. Additionally, this panel shall discuss real life expressions and needs of indigenous populations in World Heritage Sites, for example the Australian Aborigines in Kakadu National Park or the Brazilian indigenous population in the Central Amazon Conservation Complex as well as their respective land and property rights. In practice, it has not been resolved how legally guaranteed indigenous rights can be protected from the dynamics of economic and political globalisation. This concerns both land use as well as specific indigenous knowledge systems which evolve in close contact with the natural environment.

Summary

The results of the four panels will be presented at the end of the conference and shall be summarized in four thematically oriented panel discussions. The discussions shall answer the main question: How can the new findings find an application in university education?