

EURA 2022 Conference

Defrag-Europe: fragility/antifragility at play in contemporary Europe

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



Matteo Basso
IUAV University of Venice

Remi Wacogne
IUAV University of Venice
rwacogne@iuav.it

Preorganised Panel

SESSION 5

Unpacking the global/local nexus in world heritage sites: a pragmatic approach

Keywords:

World Heritage sites, sustainable development, governance

This special panel session focuses on the critical interplay between global and local dynamics in heritage sites inscribed in the UNESCO's World Heritage List. In fact, the management, planning and governance of these particular (and fragile) heritage sites of worldwide relevance is the result of a hybridization of standardized global principles and regulations, and local interpretation of heritage meanings and policy implementation. On the one hand, this session explores the role played by UNESCO and other heritage and non-heritage organisations in setting specific international goals, recommendations, policy guidelines and governance requirements. On the other, it discusses how the global/local nexus is affected by contemporary dynamics of change such as increasing touristification, marketing of local cultures, identities and landscapes for economic purposes, inconsiderate developments, and gentrification processes. Particular attention is paid to the (more or less explicit) conflicts generated by the friction between global and local heritage-based narratives, and between different priorities for local economic development (also through tourism promotion), conservation of heritage sites, and improvement of citizens' quality of life.

This panel discussion contributes to track 8 (Fragile Heritage Sites in a Globalizing World) by presenting a reflection based on (mostly European) case studies and an ever-growing literature on these topics. Key themes are: a) the global/local interplay in fragile World Heritage sites in historic urban environments, cultural landscapes and beyond; b) the suggestion of possible policy recommendations for a more sustainable planning practice in such contexts. The panel session consists in the following four contributions. Francesca Giliberto (University of Leeds, UK) examines the "heritage versus development dilemma" through the lens of a 21st century international approach to urban heritage conservation, management, and development. She highlights how, following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the United Nations (2015), UNESCO and ICOMOS – among others– have issued a series of ground-breaking documents to advocate for the importance of heritage for sustainable development, and have provided guidance on how to take concrete measures at the local level in that sense. She critically discusses the discrepancies between the global narratives and recommendations suggested in these documents and their local implementation focusing on the two World Heritage Cities (WHCs) of Florence (Italy) and Edinburgh (UK). She sheds light on effective practices and existing challenges by examining their management systems and urban regulatory frameworks in particular. Finally, she provides recommendations to rethink and reframe current urban heritage management

practices for more sustainable WHCs, based on critical insights from “PRAXIS: Arts and Humanities for Global Development”, a research project led by the University of Leeds.

Matteo Basso (Iuav University of Venice, Italy) challenges the dominant and essentially positive rural imagery conveyed by the successful inscription of the Prosecco Hills of Conegliano and Valdobbiadene (Italy) in the World Heritage List. Through a qualitative analysis based on planning documents and interviews with key actors, he emphasizes frictions and contradictions existing not only between global and local heritage-based narratives and initiatives, but also between different values and territorial aspirations. He underlines how the massive vineyard expansion generated by the Prosecco’s global demand has generated environmental impacts and health consequences triggered by the use of chemicals, and thus a growing discontent among locals. These challenges, together with the impacts of the vineyard expansion on the cultural landscape and a set of recommendations formulated by the World Heritage Centre, have resulted in diffused conflicts among different actors. In this context, Basso questions the role of ordinary planning tools in addressing more effectively the interactions between vineyards and urban settlements, as well as between heritage and development.

Ilaria Rosetti (University of Antwerp, Belgium) focuses on participatory processes in managing WHCs, and their multiple roles with regard to sustainable urban development. International organisations acknowledge their relevance in official documents, promoting collaborative, inclusive, and equitable heritage processes at national and local levels. In turn, much research work has investigated the challenges and opportunities of implementing participatory heritage practices in WHCs. Different actors’ perspectives have been analysed, including local authorities and other organisations, practitioners as well as local communities, emphasising the role of governing bodies –especially elected ones– in decision-making processes. Still, although they play a key part in the identification and allocation of resources and in the prioritization of policies and actions, such actors’ perception of participatory heritage practices has been little explored. To address this gap, a mayors’ workshop was organized during the 2017 XIV World Congress of the Organization of WHCs, whose findings are discussed in Rosetti’s contribution. Beyond evident commonalities and differences, she analyses the challenges, both internal (weaknesses) and external (threats), that are perceived to hinder the implementation of participatory heritage practices in WHCs, as well as their implications for the quality of participation and sustainable heritage practices.

Finally, Remi Wacogne (Iuav University of Venice, Italy) identifies key highlights emerged from the three previous contributions, i.e. that stakeholders involved in processes related to WH sites act according to sensibly different agendas and procedures. Drawing on the experience of the “support to the coordination of UNESCO sites of Veneto” carried out by a research group of Iuav with a formal agreement with the Veneto Region, his contribution presents an application of the actor-network theory (ANT) in this dynamic context. Through a renewed mapping of actors and agencies involved in processes related to WHS, further practical implications for planning and public policy at the local, regional, national and international levels, are highlighted.

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Matteo Basso

Università IUAV di Venezia

mbasso@iuav.it

GLOBAL/LOCAL FRICTIONS IN HERITAGE-BASED NARRATIVES AND POLICIES

Keywords:

heritage-based narratives, Prosecco Hills, sustainability

This contribution investigates the interplay between global forces and local dynamics in a rural area, recently recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where the globally known Italian Prosecco wine is produced. Specifically, the aim is to reflect not only on the frictions and contradictions between global and local heritage-based narratives and initiatives, but also between different values and territorial aspirations: economic development, promotion of tourism, landscape conservation, the citizens' demand for a higher quality of life. Such contradictions have recently become evident in the diffused conflicts that have emerged as a consequence of a massive vineyard expansion generated by the Prosecco's global demand, a growing discontent of locals for the related landscape and environmental impacts (as well as the health impacts triggered by the use of chemicals), a set of regulations imposed by UNESCO for the preservation of the local heritage. In general terms, the contribution seeks to challenge the dominant and essentially positive imagery about the rural – from which the successful heritage-based narratives draw inspiration – also recognizing the urgency, for urban planning, to re-frame the urban/rural dichotomy. In a globalizing premier wine-region such as that of Prosecco, the priority is today not simply to protect the countryside from the growth of cities, but also to manage the negative impacts of agro-industries on urban settlements. The unsustainable development trajectories in the Prosecco Hills, from both an environmental and social perspective, call indeed for a general reflection on the role of ordinary planning tools in addressing the interactions between vineyards and residential zones more effectively. To what extent are ordinary planning tools managing these interactions? What role can spatial planning play in balancing, in a more sustainable way, the expansion of vineyards and the local populations' needs in terms of quality of life? To answer these questions, this study adopts a qualitative research method based on the analysis of planning documents and interviews with key actors.

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CONNECTING SITES: WHAT DOES WORLD HERITAGE SITE MANAGEMENT CONSIST IN? INSIGHTS FROM VENETO

Keywords:

World Heritage sites, governance, sustainable development

As often emphasized, UNESCO's World Heritage programme stands out for its global relevance as much as for its local impacts. At the same time, such impacts are heterogeneous and their assessment uneasy, inasmuch stakeholders involved in processes related to World Heritage sites (WHS) act according to sensibly different agendas and procedures: local, regional and national governments, civic organisations, tourism operators, heritage experts – including those working for, or in collaboration with, the World Heritage Center itself –, and so on. What is meant by WHS' management is thus less clear-cut than generally assumed. Drawing upon the experience of the 'support to the coordination of UNESCO sites of Veneto' carried out by a research group of IUAV through a formal agreement with the Veneto Region, this contribution presents an application of the actor-network theory (ANT) to WHS management. It provides an accurate mapping of actors and agencies involved in processes related to WHS, and proposes a pragmatic approach to a field often investigated primarily through documents (such as international recommendations or management plans) rather than in terms of social dynamics. Further practical implications for planning and public policy at the local, regional, national and international levels, are then highlighted.

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Ilaria Rosetti

*University of Antwerp
ilaria.rosetti@uantwerpen.be*

PARTICIPATION IN WH CITIES: GOVERNMENTAL PERSPECTIVES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

Keywords:

World Heritage Cities, participation, mayors

Participatory heritage practices can play multiple roles in achieving sustainable urban development. They are advocated as an expression of rights-based approaches, as a driver of multiple sustainability goals, and as an enabling factor of a sustained transformation towards sustainability-oriented heritage practices. International heritage organizations acknowledge these roles in their regulatory documents, promoting collaborative, inclusive, and equitable heritage processes at national and local levels. In this context, World Heritage (WH) cities offer a peculiar environment to observe how international, national, and local dynamics, actors, networks, and regulations interact. Much case studies-based research investigated the challenges and opportunities of implementing participatory heritage practices in WH cities, often revealing the perspective of local communities, organizations, practitioners, and other groups of stakeholders. Recent research stressed the key role that public actors, particularly political ones, have in decisionmaking processes, especially in the identification and allocation of resources and in the prioritization of policies and actions. However, little research has explored governmental actors' perception, mainly focusing on specific cases, and without comparing their perspectives across regions. To address this gap, a mayors' workshop was organized by a team of researcher, including the author, during the 2017 XIV World Congress of the Organization of WH Cities to unveil the perception that WH cities' representatives have of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) of participatory heritage practices in their urban areas. Research findings revealed strong interconnections among the different SWOT elements, as well as commonalities and differences among WH cities worldwide. This presentation focuses on the analysis of the challenges, both internal (weaknesses) and external (threats), that are perceived to hinder the implementation of participatory heritage practices in WH Cities. Participation itself, regulation, resources, awareness, and communication are among the most mentioned fragilities across regions. Particularly, participation appears as the most mentioned element across the entire SWOT. The interconnection among these factors and their implications for the quality of participation is discussed, reflecting on their implications for a sustained transformation towards sustainability-oriented heritage practices.

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INTERNATIONAL APPROACHES VS LOCAL PRACTICES IN WORLD HERITAGE CITIES

Keywords:

sustainable development, urban conservation, heritage management

The “heritage versus development dilemma” has been central to the international debate on urban heritage conservation, management, and development in the 21 centuries. In the past three decades, international heritage organisations have taken the lead to overcome this persisting dichotomy by publishing a series of international policy documents, recommendations and guidelines. In particular, following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the United Nations in 2015, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) – among other international organisations – have issued a series of ground-breaking documents to advocate for the importance of heritage for sustainable development. They have also provided guidance on how to take concrete measures at the local level, supporting the implementation of a holistic, integrated, flexible, and participatory approach to heritage conservation in strategies for sustainable urban management. National and local policymakers, institutions, practitioners, and local residents are called on to implement this approach on the ground. What has been the impact of these international texts at the local level? How far do urban heritage practices depart from international guidance? This paper critically discusses the discrepancies between global narratives and recommendations and their practical implementation on the ground. Focusing on the two World Heritage cities of Florence (Italy) and Edinburgh (UK), it also reveals effective practices and existing challenges by examining their management systems and urban regulatory frameworks. Finally, it provides recommendations to rethink and reframe current urban heritage management practices for more sustainable (World Heritage) cities based on critical insights from ‘PRAXIS: Arts and Humanities for Global Development’, a research project of the University of Leeds.

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