

ICOA1562: MANAGING UNIVERSITY CULTURAL HERITAGE: SUBVERTING GAPS AND FOUNDING EQUALITY

Subtheme 01: Integrating Heritage and Sustainable Urban Development by engaging diverse Communities for Heritage Management

Session 2: Management, Documentation

Location: Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre

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Abstract: Often defined as the belief of equality and freedom between people, Democracy may establish a fruitful alliance with Cultural Heritage Management in achieving its deepest and more authentic goals. Democracy founded on unequal access to education and culture, both considered as basic human rights, will be always feeble and incomplete. This paper explores, from a theoretical approach but also by examining cases of study, how Heritage Management at Universities may tribute to undermine traditional social gaps deeply rooted in contemporary society.

Cuba is considered one of the countries with highest rate of University students and graduates in Latin America, but recent studies have highlighted that achievement may be closely linked to race, social origin and gender in Cuban Higher Education Institutions. Actually, these reports have described Cuban University, specially the University of Havana as a “White University”, considering the supremacy of white students in its classrooms.

The feeling of disbelief in what concerns to success in Higher Education studies, confirmed in surveys applied to High School students by the University Cultural Heritage Unit, is even more intense in the case of the University of Havana, because it is the oldest and most prestigious Cuban University, and its urban and architectural image is exceptionally impacting: more than 70 percent of the students interviewed in a High School located in the same neighbourhood of the University have never visited the campus.

The University Cultural Heritage Unit, founded in 2010, has reinforced the Institution’s social commitment by approaching adolescents, family members and community through Schools, collections, museums, laboratories, and also to students and professors inspirational experiences. Cultural Heritage management has been focused on presenting a welcoming, open and social inclusive Institution as a result of a strategy based on updated interpretation programs, guided tours, conferences, and social media campaigns.

Foreword: communities in heritage management and human rights

Community involvement has clearly gained attention in international law, doctrinal documents and academic forums in the last decades. Actually, considering community participation deeply connected with others topics like cultural tourism, economics of heritage, or democracy, ICOMOS has devoted two consecutive scientific symposiums¹ to explore how in theory and practice ‘people-centred approaches’² may be placed at the core of contemporary heritage management.

The concept and practice of community engagement in heritage preservation has a long path and its origin may be blurred (just following a particular example, ‘community archaeology’ has been referred in literature since the seventies).³ Community engagement is seen today regularly as a contribution «to improve health and well-being; increase social exclusion; reduce criminal and antisocial behaviour; increase enterprise and learning cultures; and encourage participation in the democratic process».⁴ Yet accurate examination of the successes and failures associated to the practical and conceptual exercise of this principle demands attention.

‘Community’ or ‘communities’ remained as a vague concept in international law, assuming diverse dimensions and denominations. «Words having a community dimension are utilized, such as: people at large, women, youth, indigenous people, local communities or local populations, inhabitants, civil society, minorities, public, farmers, cultural site managers, public or private agencies, private sector and non-governmental organizations».⁵ ICCROM proposes three categories of «groups of people» to be considered in heritage conservation: communities of place (those who live within or near the heritage), communities of interest (those who feel a connection to or are interested in heritage) and communities of practice (those who work with heritage).⁶ In practice, this partition deals with different layers of complexity, taking into account the subjective dimension of ‘connection’ or ‘interest’ in certain heritage expression if, for example, it is considered a shared symbol of national identity. These communities of interest are linked to the concept of ‘stakeholders’, and as it has been stated, «stakeholders such as professionals, landowners, politicians, tourists, descent communities, and others with an interest in the past typically coexist with communities of place, and they are often multiple and contradictory».⁷ New definitions like ‘Heritage Community’ have risen in the last decade in documents like the Council of Europe’s Faro Convention, coexisting with not equal, but similar notions («community, groups and individuals») present in UNESCO’s texts.⁸ However, in the majority of UNESCO instruments there is no reference to ‘the right to cultural heritage’. «The respect for human rights is a condition for the safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage or for the protection of cultural diversity. In the UNESCO’s instruments there is no perception of the idea of inherence of the cultural identity/ diversity in the sphere of human rights».⁹

¹ The main theme of the Scientific Symposium in the 18 Assembly of ICOMOS in Florence was “Heritage and Landscape as Human Values”.

² Court, Wijesuriya, 2015

³ Chirikure, Pwiti, 2008: 467-468.

⁴ Court, Wijesuriya, 2015: 3.

⁵ Urbinati, 2015: 125-126.

⁶ Court, Wijesuriya, 2015: 3-4.

⁷ Chirikure, Pwiti, 2008: 468.

⁸ Zagato, 2015: 141-142.

⁹ Zagato, 2015: 143.

In the *Fribourg Declaration on Cultural Rights*, cultural rights are described in a multidimensional scope which includes the «right to identity and cultural heritage; Right to identification with the cultural community of his choice; Right to access and participation in cultural life; Right to education and training; Right to communication and Information; Right to participation in the cultural policies and cooperation».¹⁰ Although the Article 27 of the *United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights* affirms that «everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits», the triad heritage-community-human rights is not necessarily often summoned in certain fields of heritage management like the one devoted to protect the heritage of universities.

University heritage management and community

The ‘heritage of universities’ shall be understood to encompass all tangible and intangible heritage related to higher education institutions, bodies and systems as well as to the academic community of scholars and students, and the social and cultural environment of which this heritage is a part (...) It is an accumulated source of wealth with direct reference to the academic community of scholars and students, their beliefs, values, achievements and their social and cultural function as well as modes of transmission of knowledge and capacity for innovation¹¹. The University Heritage, depending on its particular history, may be relevant not only to the Institution but to the regional, national or continental culture and therefore demands attention from heritage decision makers at several levels.¹² Its dual dimension ‘between two worlds’, the world of heritage management and academia, was brilliantly described by Marta Lourenço in her PhD dissertation: «University museums are ‘strange beasts’ indeed. They fluctuate between the world of museums and the world of academia (...) University museums do not feel completely at ease in the museum sector, but they do not feel completely at ease in the university either».¹³ In what concerns to the contribution of university heritage management to guarantee the respect of human rights such as cultural rights and education and training, this duality can be appreciated as a potentiality rather than a limitation.

Almost all doctrinal texts of the last decades dedicated to University Heritage mentions ‘community’ in reference to academic community, and the denomination of other groups of people to be considered in University Heritage management varies: ‘public’ or ‘broad public’¹⁴, ‘general public’¹⁵ and ‘society’.¹⁶ ‘Local community’ is a less common term, present in the appendix to *Recommendation Rec (2005) of the Council of Europe*, by encouraging institutions «to seek to develop and maintain close connections with the local communities of which they are a part and offer their services and expertise to these communities as appropriate» and «to seek to develop close relations with local authorities as well as with civil society in the communities in which they are located». Once again, we found a well-intentioned but vague reference to the liaisons between university heritage and community. In the same document a particularly interesting call is made to Institutions is what concerns to awareness rising: «Higher education institutions should be encouraged to make focused efforts to raise awareness of their heritage in the academic community of scholars and students, in their local communities, among political decision makers and in

¹⁰Cultural Rights, Fribourg Declaration, 2007

¹¹*Recommendation (2005)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the governance and management of university heritage.*

¹² Felipe, 2016: 74

¹³Lourenço, 2005: 156

¹⁴Declaration of Le Halle, 2000

¹⁵*Recommendation (2005)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the governance and management of university heritage.*

¹⁶*Magna Charta Universitatum; Declaración de Salamanca sobre el patrimonio histórico-cultural de las Universidades (2008); Declaración de Alcalá sobre la protección, conservación y difusión del patrimonio universitario (2013); Declaración de México sobre protección, conservación y difusión del patrimonio, las colecciones y los museos universitarios (2015).*

civil society at large (...) and to improve knowledge and understanding of their heritage among *pupils and teachers at schools, in particular local schools*, in order to help them identify with this heritage and see it as a part of the heritage of their community and region (...). Engaging this part of the community (pupils and teachers of local schools), is the main goal of the case of study this paper aims to share, due to the fruitful contribution to a more balanced, fair and inclusive access to Higher Education that the association of university heritage management and vocational training may suppose.

Access to Higher Education in Cuba: recent balances and the University of Havana

Recent studies conducted by the University of Havana-based Centre for the Improvement of Higher Education, have illuminated that, despite the efforts of the Cuban Government to guarantee universal and free access to universities, traces of inequality and discrimination remain in the enrolment process. Using indicators such as the colour of the skin, sex and parent's academic degree, experts state that white students show a superior rate of success in accessing universities, and there is a superior presence of children of university professionals or leaders among accepted students, which indicates to a self-reproduction process of Cuban professionals.¹⁷

Lack of motivation, low self-esteem expressed in the feeling of not being trained enough to pass entrance examinations or that they had few opportunities to obtain the degrees they liked the most, are among the reasons declared by the students who did not apply or failed to enter University two years ago.¹⁸ The numbers of the University of Havana in particular, home of some of the most demanded bachelor degrees (Tourism, Foreign Languages, Design, etc.) and of the historically white-manly-severe faculties of basic sciences (Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics) point to an even more elitist selection process. In the past years, when the concept of university pertinence is constantly analyzed in terms of economic, politic or social impact, Cuban universities have identified the need to increase the levels of equity in the access to Higher Education as a priority.¹⁹ Previous levels of education are fundamental considering that the segregation process, whose expression is more clear at the moment of University enrolment, starts earlier, mostly by the end of secondary school before entering High School or Polytechnic Schools.²⁰ Facing this complex scenario, is University heritage a valuable resource to mitigate social gaps? May be an opportunity to enhance the general awareness of University cultural and heritage values?

Approaching communities and subverting gaps: University of Havana and 'Saul Delgado' High School

By the end of 2010, the University Cultural Heritage Department of the University of Havana²¹ was created with the aim of designing a coherent and holistic policy regarding the cultural values of the University. First approaches confirmed the urgency of a program focused on the interpretation and enrichment of intellectual values based on the strong feeling of academic community and to implicate the community as a whole in this process due to the significance of the University of Havana in the imaginary of Cuban people.²² Since 2014 the University participates in a popular and successful cultural project every summer, led by the Office of the Havana Historian (OHC), called *Rutas y Andares* (Routes and

¹⁷Tejuca, Gutiérrez, García, 2015: 42

¹⁸Tejuca, Gutiérrez, Hernández, Ojalvo 2017: 165

¹⁹Sosa, Iñigo, Martín, 2016: 30

²⁰Tejuca, Gutiérrez, Hernández, Ojalvo, 2017

²¹ Since 2015 is the University Heritage Unit.

²²Felipe 2014: 162

Walks), inviting families to appreciate Havana cultural heritage and its preservation²³. The overwhelming acceptance of the University in the visitor's preference confirmed the necessity of expanding the frame of interaction as part of a coherent and lasting plan.

'Saul Delgado Duarte' is the nearest high school to the University of Havana. Mostly all of its 1300 students live in Plaza municipality, the same where the University is located. Despite the proximity of our Institution to the High School and to their homes, students felt higher education distant physically and spiritually: the majority of them have not visited previously the campus, or met graduates, current students and university staff. Surveys conducted by the School authorities revealed alarming results:

- Students do not know properly the degrees offered by the universities (sometimes mentioning nonexistent degrees).
- Orientation materials provided to facilitate the selection of degrees is considered not attractive and teachers are not adequately prepared to assist students in the process.
- Selected degrees are usually disconnected from students' real possibilities of success analyzing their academic rates.
- Most popular degrees according to students' aims, do not match what in the Cuban labour market is considered the most 'depressed' and 'prioritized' areas.
- Vocational training is mostly concentrated on students of the last year of High School (12 grade), consequently, a third part of 10 and 11 grade students declared they wanted to access University but they do not know what to study.
- Students also declared that Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry were the less attractive courses of their curriculum (actually a massive group confessed they would like not to have study them anymore).²⁴

A group of coordinated actions, as part of a pedagogical strategy conceived to improve the quality and equity of the enrolment process, was designed by the School and the Cuban Ministry of Higher Education and developed in the last four years.²⁵ University Heritage in its most vast expression (material and immaterial culture) happened to be a precious asset to abolish the distance between University and community, in this case potential new members of academic community. After a cycle of visits, guided-tours through the campus, conferences with specialists of all faculties and 'open doors' sessions (special emphasis was made in the intellectual tradition and perspectives of basic sciences degrees), the results of the project were explicitly positives. Students declared:

- They felt more confident to face responsibly the university enrolment process
- They started to consider new bachelor degrees options more fitted to their possibilities and academic rates.
- The program enriched their cultural and professional background.
- The program should not only prioritized the last year of High School (12 grade) but the rest in order to provide early assistance in selecting future bachelor degrees

For University Heritage management, this one and others analogous initiatives not only enlarge the access of a broad and non-regular public to institutional heritage, but also promote a desirable renovated and vital image of contemporary university values and heritage. Furthermore, by involving numerous University areas (faculties, laboratories, collections, museums) in the activities of the project, the feeling of the diversity and unity of common heritage grows inside academic community.

²³ Partial results of the participation of the University in the project were presented by the author in the Scientific Symposium in of ICOMOS 18 General Assembly (Felipe 2015)

²⁴Avila, 2016

²⁵ The analysis of the results and the impact of the project is currently developed as part of a PhD dissertation by Yuraimys Ávila.

Conclusions

Although community participation and cooperation is acknowledged as one of the most powerful ways of guarantying sustainability and effectiveness of heritage preservation, notions like community, people or society remained vague and poorly conceptualized in doctrinal and legal documents. The right to culture and heritage is not often recognized as part of human rights, closely connected to other rights like the right to education, training or science.

In the case of university heritage management, engaging community in heritage preservation is usually focus on academic community and is less precise in what concerns to the rest of groups of people involved in heritage management. Considering the intrinsic duality of university heritage (defined by its conceptual and practical relation with the academic and educational fields), its contribution to subvert social inequity in accessing culture and higher education may be particularly valuable and mutually useful for university heritage and the community in its most broad definition.

Achieving social equality is a long and complex process that requires systematic and integral attention from individuals to decision makers. Social pertinence of contemporary university, in particular university heritage management, should be founded on a deep understanding of its potential contribution to guarantee and consolidate essential human rights insight and outside its walls. Alliances like the one presented, between a local high school and the oldest Cuban university, are a modest but valuable expression of collaboration based on this awareness.

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ICOA1562: GÉRER LE PATRIMOINE CULTUREL UNIVERSITAIRE: COMBLER LES ÉCARTS ET FONDER L'ÉQUITÉ

Sous-thème 01: Intégrer le patrimoine et le développement urbain durable en engageant Diverses communautés pour la gestion du patrimoine

Session 2: Le management, documentation

Lieu: Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre

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Résumé: Souvent définie comme la croyance en l'équité et la liberté entre les peuples, la démocratie peut établir une alliance fructueuse avec la gestion du patrimoine culturel en réalisant ses objectifs les plus sincères et les plus authentiques. La démocratie fondée sur l'inégalité d'accès à l'éducation et à la culture, toutes deux considérées comme droits humains fondamentaux, sera toujours faible et inaboutie. Cet article examine, à partir d'une approche théorique mais aussi par l'examen d'études de cas, comment la gestion du patrimoine dans les universités peut contribuer à contrecarrer les inégalités sociales traditionnelles profondément enracinées dans la société contemporaine.

Cuba est considéré comme l'un des pays au taux le plus élevé d'étudiants et diplômés universitaires en Amérique latine, mais des études récentes ont souligné que ce succès pourrait être étroitement lié à la race, l'origine sociale et au genre dans les institutions cubaines d'enseignement supérieur. En réalité, ces rapports ont décrit l'Université cubaine, en particulier l'Université de La Havane, comme une « Université blanche », considérant la suprématie des étudiants blancs dans ses classes.

Le sentiment de scepticisme concernant la réussite dans les études d'enseignement supérieur, confirmé dans les enquêtes effectuées auprès des étudiants d'écoles supérieures par l'Unité « Patrimoine culturel universitaire », est encore plus intense dans le cas de l'Université de La Havane, car il s'agit de l'université cubaine la plus ancienne et la plus prestigieuse, et son image urbaine et architecturale a un impact exceptionnel : plus de 70 pour cent des étudiants interviewés dans une école supérieure située dans les alentours de l'Université n'ont jamais visité le campus.

L'Unité « Patrimoine culturel universitaire », fondée en 2010, a renforcé l'engagement social de l'Institution en rapprochant adolescents, membres de leur famille et communauté des écoles, collections, musées, laboratoires, et également des expériences stimulantes des étudiants et des professeurs. La gestion du patrimoine culturel s'est focalisée sur la présentation d'une Institution

accueillante, ouverte et socialement intégrée, résultant d'une stratégie basée sur des programmes d'interprétation actualisés, des visites guidées, des conférences et des campagnes sur les réseaux sociaux.