

## World Heritage and sustainable development: new directions in World Heritage management

edited by Peter Bille Larsen and William Logan, London and New York,  
Routledge, 2018, 293 pp., GBP 110.00 (hardcover), ISBN: 9781138091405

**Daniel Navas-Carrillo & Javier Navarro-de-Pablos**

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**World Heritage and sustainable development: new directions in World Heritage management**, edited by Peter Bille Larsen and William Logan, London and New York, Routledge, 2018, 293 pp., GBP 110.00 (hardcover), ISBN: 9781138091405

*World Heritage and Sustainable Development: New Directions in World Heritage Management* represents an ambitious initiative, drawing its inspiration from the *Policy for the integration of sustainable development perspective into the processes of the World Heritage Convention* adopted by the General Assembly of the States Parties to the World Heritage Convention in November 2015 (hereafter the World Heritage and Sustainable Development policy). Through eighteen chapters organised into four sections, the editors, Peter Bille Larsen and William Logan, provides a rigorous analysis collecting official positions linked to the World Heritage Centre, approaches from the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee and several national public institutions, as well as diverse points of view from academia.

Part of Routledge's 'Key Issues in Cultural Heritage' series, the volume aims to provide a wide-ranging international and interdisciplinary debate. The contributors, comprising 14 women and 13 men, as well as the large number of case studies that have been illustrated and analysed throughout the book, represent the continents of Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and Oceania, including more than fifteen countries. Moreover, its interdisciplinarity is enhanced by perspectives based in several fields and disciplines related to architecture, engineering, humanities and social science. These features signal the editors' desire to create a meeting space for researchers and professionals to reflect and exchange knowledge; as such dialogue is called for by the World Heritage and Sustainable Development policy in order to advance in its implementation. As such, these contributions are not only necessary for updating theoretical considerations and best practices relating to heritage and sustainable development, but from a teaching perspective, they provide guidelines for training those responsible for the preservation, conservation and management of cultural and natural heritage for the foreseeable future.

The wise introductory chapter is essential for understanding how the book's structure and organisation. This first section, *Historical, theoretical and institutional frameworks*, provides two essays that delve into the main milestones in the conceptual and legislative evolution of the relationship between natural and cultural heritage and the notion of sustainable development. The authors place the beginning of this process in the drawing up of the *Brundtland Report*, released in October 1987 by the United Nations, and the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, published by UNESCO in 1994. However, the most significant advances in the integration of the sustainable development objectives into World Heritage management processes and systems have taken place in the last decade, and they have rarely transcended theoretical boundaries. However, the most significant advances in the integration of the sustainable development objectives into World Heritage management processes and systems have taken place in the last decade, and they have rarely transcended theoretical boundaries. This fact leads us to highlight the great scientific interest of this monograph both from a theoretical and a practical point of view.

The second section, *Policy dimensions and overarching principles*, although built from theoretical approaches, provides a more robust direction for related professional practice. Its six chapters examine in detail the overarching principles of Human Rights, Equality, Long-term Sustainability, as well as the four core dimensions of inclusive economic development, inclusive social development, peace and security, environmental sustainability from which the World Heritage and Sustainable Development policy has been structured. For instance, C. Oos points out that 'a risk assessment process that is applied to the World Heritage properties would include the identification of economic opportunities and threats faced by the natural and cultural heritage, considered as inclusive cultural capital' (pp.64).



It should be noted that two of the chapters, by S. Labadi and S. Disko & M. Ooft, each discuss the significance of the World Heritage and Sustainable Development policy in relation to indigenous people's rights and gender equality, respectfully. As argued by Pfeilstetter (2017), heritage has traditionally been constructed from elitist, Eurocentric and masculine points of view. As a counterbalance to this dominant 'authorized heritage discourse' (Smith 2006), increased attention in the heritage enterprise is being placed on promoting and safeguarding the cultural heritage of rural communities, working classes, or indigenous communities. The gender perspective is beginning to be included bit by bit in heritage discourses. In this sense, the challenge is not only to consider them in heritage assessment. It also involves ensuring respect for their rights in the context of World Heritage properties, especially concerning tourism and globalisation effects, as well as, contributing to achieving equality and the empowerment of all these previously marginalised groups in order to harness their vital contribution to sustainable development.

In the section focused on *Advisory Bodies views*, the editors give the floor to International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), and International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), the three international organizations that advise the World Heritage Committee in its decisions. On the one hand, this third part is mainly destined to neophytes in order to understand the effort that these institutions are doing to guarantee the preservation of the World Heritage. Every chapter synthesises the trajectory of one of these organisations since its foundation according to the conceptual changes experienced on the matter. On the other, they seek to clarify the possible integration of their functions and responsibilities (evaluations of natural, cultural and mixed heritage properties, as well as the provision of tools, knowledge and skills for their conservation) into the Sustainable Development guidelines. It is particularly interesting to figure out the recent ICOMOS's initiatives to promote the implementation of the World Heritage and Sustainable Development policy.

The last part, *World Heritage site case studies*, focuses on providing empirical and multiple-scale approaches through a wide selection of international examples. This study contains the analysis of the set of World Heritage sites of Vietnam, including five cultural sites (Central Sector of the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long – Hanoi, Citadel of the Ho Dynasty, Complex of Huế Monuments, Hoi An Ancient Town, and My Son Sanctuary), two natural sites (Ha Long Bay, Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park) and one mixed site (Trang An Landscape Complex). Others carry out the detailed study of a unique cultural site: Historic Cairo (Egypt), Town of Bamberg (Germany), Coffee Cultural Landscape of Colombia, Stone Town of Zanzibar (Tanzania). The last of the contribution focuses on the historic quarter within the buffer zone of the Dujiangyan Irrigation System (China). The reasons behind the selection could be discussed; in fact, the selection reflects the imbalance that currently persists between the cultural sites and the other two categories, demanding a higher proportion of natural and mixed cases. However, the selected cases cover the five UNESCO Regions (Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and North America, Latin America and the Caribbean), the three categories, the ten selection criteria, as well as, a broad temporal framework (1979–2014). In some way, the authors have tried to align with the global strategy for a balanced, representative, and credible world heritage list.

Before concluding this recommendation, it is necessary to highlight the interesting terminological index that is included at the end of this book. With more than 300 entries, it allows deepening in the particularised knowledge about stakeholders, scenarios and topics that have been mentioned in the different chapters. In this sense, Peter Billie Larsen and William Logan's book not only allows us to approach the current challenges in the adaptation of the World Heritage processes to the Sustainable Development Goals, but it is presented as an opportune and highly topical text that goes beyond, putting particular



emphasis on the management systems of the World Heritage properties, a pivotal phase to ensure the heritage safeguarding for present and future generations.

Daniel Navas-Carrillo and Javier Navarro-de-Pablos  
*Heritage and Urban Territorial Development in Andalusia, Department of Urbanism and  
Regional Planning, University of Seville (Spain)*

 dnavas@us.es

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9704-3204>  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1315-3087>

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