

“ HISTORIC FORM”

THE CORNERSTONE TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Since earliest times, trade set the basis for " globe-girdling integration " (The Group of 78 *², 1999). Exchange of goods and services, along with ideas, brought cultures in contact and allowed greater understanding between differing people.

Change, that is inherent in all things, characterized the last decade of the 20th century. With the collapse of the Soviet Bloc and the end of the Cold War, we experienced the rise of multinational enterprises, as well as the revolution in information and communication technologies. All this led to " the speed, intensity and extend of World integration, especially in economic affairs " which in turn "made globalization a dominant theme in international discourse" (US/ICOMOS*³, 1996).

Globalization, or the unified global system, involves much more than trade and finance. New rules and new roles along with the internet and interpol, pop culture and global crime, immunization and AIDS are part and parcel of the world move towards global integration, (Jolly, R., 1999).

Globalization is perceived from different perspectives. In Western countries, some people consider it to be a greater obligation towards the planet's human community, although acceleration of economy and culture integration might lead to dilution and perhaps collapse of traditional ways of life. While others perceive this process as the "reaffirmation of the common destiny of the human race and an opportunity to bring about peace through universal understanding" (US/ICOMOS, 1996).

In developing countries globophobia -fear of globalization and its stress mainly on the economics without giving enough care to human needs- appeared, and was based on " labour market and environmental problems attributed to globalization"(The Group of 78, 1999). The widening gap between the north and the south, the rich and the poor increased social instability. Additionally, fear of imposing the American tolerance for inequality, and of the World Trade Organization's (WTO) dispute-settlements powers, as in food safety area for example, caused antagonistic feelings towards this new process.

With technological changes in the past few years, more jobs have been eliminated than created, the competition that is part and parcel of globalization leads to winner

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²)The Group of 78 includes 59 members but drew 78people who met in Cantley, Quebec, October 1999 for their annual meeting to discuss Globalization & its Discontents .

³) US/ICOMOS : International Council on Monuments And Sites, U.S. Committee.

take all situations; those who come out on top win big; the losers lose even bigger (Swab, K., & Smadja, C., 1996). And as Globalization emphasizes "the importance of knowledge-based productivity, education and training, research and development"(The Group of 78, 1999), the challenges facing developing countries are increasing. There is a need, then, to control human insecurities that affect critical areas of people's life (Jolly, R, 1999). These include finance, income and jobs, health, culture, personal, environmental, political and community insecurities.

The challenge of inequality has also been growing with globalization. " The gap between the incomes of fifth of the world's population living in the richest countries to the fifth living in the poorest countries has reached 74 to 1 in 1997" (Jolly, R, 1999).

According to the representatives of the world's 1000 largest global corporations in the form of the World Economic Forum " unless serious corrective action is taken soon, the backlash could turn into open political revolt and destabilize the western democracies" (Swab, K., & Smadja, C., 1996).

With the development difficulties facing Third World nations, specially that the intensified global competition requires collaboration for gaining access to markets, there is a need to look for the industry that can help going through these difficult times.

Tourism is one of "the world's largest industries that can reach parts of the planet that other industries do not reach" (Bellamy, D. & Jones, A., 1998). If managed in a sustainable manner, that is environmentally sensitive and allowing stronger community involvement, it could protect various forms of heritage, import cash and export good will, (Bellamy, D. & Jones, A, 1998).

AIM OF STUDY:

Given the present challenges and the need to use different approaches to counteract globalization, the process that is sweeping the globe and dominating the vulnerable and the least developing countries, this study aims at:

- Exploring various approaches for managing historic environments, as well as reviewing different points of view regarding the conservation of heritage buildings, in order to set the managing strategy that could promote tourism leading, thus, to sustainable development.

- Reviewing conservation policy for historic environments and the historic building code concerned with codifying their protection.

- Providing suggestions for the outline of academic courses that enhance their scholars understanding of heritage structures characteristics, and that in order to provide society with graduates well equipped to work with agencies concerned with conservation and heritage tourism.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

Sustainable development, according to agenda 21, "implies a new concept of economic growth- one that provides fairness and opportunity for all the world's people, not just the privileged few, without further destroying the world's natural resources and without further compromising the carrying capacity of the globe" (Habitat, 1994). It is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

Tourism could be promoted by developing sustainable tourism programs based on cultural, historic and natural resources.

By preparing heritage tourism strategies that could be used as national heritage tourism initiatives, economic and community development would be attained. Revenue streams will flow back into the host communities.

What is Heritage Tourism:

With Globalization processes leading to an increase in commercial and political relations between people of different countries, there is the growing fear, among these, of a loss of community and architectural identity.

Cultural resistance to this threat would be reflected in the promotion of heritage tourism and conservation, and that in order to heal the ruptures with the past and "bridge contemporary life with past heritage" (Khan, H., 1999).

"Heritage tourism is travel that is motivated by a desire to experience the authentic natural, historic and cultural resources of a community or region" (NC Department. of commerce, 2002).

"The challenge for communities and heritage (resources managers) is to provide a unique special and participatory tourist experience that will bring with it jobs, as well as economic development in terms of investment in a range of initiatives. The challenge is further complicated, and that is due to the need to preserve the character of the community, and its heritage resources. Additionally, offering an authentic experience, and respecting the social and cultural way of life of the host community, should be a priority while ensuring the sustainability and authenticity of the tourist product, (McNulty, R.,Utah Division of State History, Preserving our Past through Heritage Tourism, 1995).

Heritage tourism has emerged as a vehicle for economic development in many countries around the world. It affects the residents of the visited community in economic and noneconomic ways. Its direct economic impact includes new jobs, new income, increased gross domestic product and increased taxes collected. While its indirect economic impacts stem from "heritage tourists' expenditures that may include business supplies, legal services, financial services, communication

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expenses and technology purchases"(North Dakota Legislative Council Staff for the Commerce and Labor Committee, 1999).

Heritage Tourism is an educational tool for visitors, residents and students, and "historic resources may be an important source of revenue" for communities. That, besides the "social value of preserving historic sites and cultural history" (North Dakota Legislative Council Staff for the Commerce and Labor Committee, 1999).

Heritage tourism program has for goal the encouragement of cooperation between strategic partners. This would lead to the development and support of the sustainable efforts that strive to protect, preserve and promote the state's natural, historic and cultural resources in order to enhance the quality of life of all the residents (NC Dept. of Commerce, 2002).

According to the National Trust of Historic Preservation, the principles that could help create sustainable heritage tourism are summarized in the following points:

- *Focus on authenticity and quality of experience.
- *Preserve and protect resources and sites.
- *Make sites come alive by developing an alluring theme that meets the expectations of the visitors.
- *Find the fit between a community or region and tourism.
- *Collaborate,(Vermont Heritage Network, 2002).

The Egyptian experience and that of many countries around the world has proved that heritage tourism brings wide social and economic benefits.

The Manitoba museum of Man and Nature in Canada, for example, generates alone \$21 million indirect and induced economic activity annually. This was clarified in the speech of the honorable Sheila Copps, Minister of Canadian heritage, at the Conference of the World Bank and UNESCO, on Investing in Cultural and National Endowments, held September 1998 in Washington, D.C. This was accomplished, in Canada, "in spite of having our cultural industries overshadowed by the much larger market of our American neighbour" (Copps, S., 1998).

With the growing competition among different countries of the world, and with the need for pulling forces to attract and encourage visitors, measures should be taken to create a tourist marketable product. This could be achieved by playing on our own identity and our historical cultural diversity (Pharaonic, Coptic, Islamic..).

HISTORIC FORM:

Historic form is the reflection of a common cultural heritage and history. It is, mainly, the embodiment of local building styles, methods and materials. Historic buildings, revealing historic form with their exceptional interesting elements, enhance architectural and historical interest in their surrounding environments and that by providing features and giving character and identity to the places. These places become familiar, cherished and raise people's sense of belonging.

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When conserving historic buildings, the historic form they reflect adds value by creating places of better quality that contribute to the quality of life. It has been proven that the better quality of places leads to security, comfort and a reduction in crime acts and in vandalism. And we could say that historic form could be considered as the essence of historic environments.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT: DEFINITION & VALUE

"Historic environment encompasses all of the physical remains of the past" (English heritage, part 5, 2000).

"Historic environment is all the physical evidence for past human activity and its associations that people can see understand and feel in the present world. It is the product of human interaction with nature created through conflict and cooperation over thousands of years. It is, also, all around us as part of everyday experience and life, and therefore, it is dynamic and continually subject to change.

At one level, it is made of places such as towns or villages.... At another levels, something we inhabit both physically and imaginatively. It is many faceted, relying on an engagement with physical remains, but also an emotional and aesthetic responses and on the power of memory, history and association." (English Heritage, part 1, 2000).

The most obvious and easily appreciated part of the historic environment is the built heritage that is the buildings in which we perform our various living activities.

Although some people consider heritage anti-change, and a luxury that keeps communities from becoming part of modern society, the protection of the historic environments has been justified in different discussions.

Historic environment is" the central part of the cultural heritage" and it raises "our sense of national identity" and is "an irreplaceable record that contributes to our understanding of the past". It has, also, "a crucial role in shaping the future". "Underlying all of this is the belief that a well-understood, well protected, publicly appreciated and sensibly-used historic environment is central to a healthy and prosperous modern society" (English Heritage, part 1, 2000).

There has been conflicting views regarding its conservation and change. Among which are the following:

John Ruskin⁴ in his "Seven Lamps of Architecture", wrote about historic buildings: We have no right whatever to touch them. They are not ours. They belong partly to those who built them, and partly to all generations of mankind who are to follow us.

Contrast to Viollet-le Duc⁵ (who completed Carcassone):

⁴)Ruskin, J. "Seven Lamps of Architecture" quoted by Sarah Staniforth (2000) at the Forbes Prize Lecture in Melbourne, Australia, September 10.

⁵)Viollet-le-Duc in C. Wetherall, On Restoration (1857),quoted in James Pope-Hennessy, (1952), Aspects of Provence, Longmans.

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To restore a building is not to preserve it, to repair or rebuild it, it is to reinstate it in a condition of completeness which could never have existed at any given time.

The Venice Charter written in 1964 defines a framework implying maintenance on a permanent basis and an appropriate and socially useful purpose for historic buildings.

That while the Burra Charter⁶ of Australia, in 1979 mentioned that "conservation means all the process of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance. Including maintenance, preservation, restoration, reconstruction, adaptation and interpretation or a combination of more than one of these.

While explaining place as sites, areas, buildings or other work, group of buildings with pertinent contents and surroundings. Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present or future generations (Staniforth, S., 2000).

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES OF HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT:

As there is a need for further research to evaluate the significance of the historic environment, to suggest a response to change and to plan the appropriately needed management strategies, the care of the historic environment should be part of the Government policy.

In many areas change will directly impact a historic environment. Physical change such as climate effects, changes in the " perception of cultural significance", (English Heritage, part 1, 2000), changes in the structure of the population including longevity and policies towards elderly people will affect the use of the historic environment. New uses suggested for buildings without losing their special character would be reflected if new occupants have new demands.

In order to pass what we value to future generations there is a need for the Conservation of the historic environment. "Conservation is poorly understood by the population in general, and, what is worse by our political masters" (Staniforth, S., 2000).

Conservation, that is the dynamic process to manage change, has a cost that could be justified when its benefits and the values it adds to society outweigh these costs. Social benefits including the contribution to a better quality of life, as well as social inclusion and economic benefits that contribute to competitiveness (English Heritage, part 5, 2000).

The Scottish and English Examples in Managing Historic Environments:

Scotland's historic environment that is characterised by its diversity and tremendous visual appeal is recognised by the Government as a finite resource. As sustainable development lies at the heart of the Government policy, historic environment is subject for encouraging its preservation and continuous use, so that "it may be

⁶) The Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance, (The Burra Charter), 4th version (1999), previous versions 1988,1981, 1979.

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enjoyed today and passed on in good order to future generations" (The Scottish Office, general policy guidelines, 2000).

"Statutory procedures exist to identify and protect buildings of architectural or historic interest and to designate areas of special architectural or historic interests as conservation areas" (The Scottish Office, historic environment, 2000).

"Maintaining and enhancing the quality of the historic environment and preserving the country's heritage are important functions of the planning system... The planning system provides the context within which policies in support of the historic environment can be set out and applied. That besides playing a positive role in enabling development that is appropriate in terms of land use, location and design" (The Scottish Office, planning policy framework, 2000).

The development planning provides for the integration of conservation policies in coordination with other planning policies affecting the historic environment, and that in order to safeguard the historic environment against inappropriate development and provide positive change in such areas.

The planning act 1997 requires compiling a list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. The purpose of listing is to ensure that a building's special architectural and/or historic interest is fully recognised and that any demolition, alteration, repair or extension that would affect the character of the listed building is brought under statutory control, (The Scottish Office, planning policy framework, 2000).

The study of the English Heritage group work, that reviewed the Government policies related to the historic environment, has shown that the historic environment contributes to the quality of life, to social inclusion -by respecting culture diversity- and to competitiveness both nationally and internationally.

There is a need for an effective system for conserving the historic environment. This might mean that the responsibility for its care goes beyond the dedicated heritage sector to encompass other Government departments and agencies, as well as private and voluntary sectors (English Heritage, part 5, 2000).

The American State Historical Building Code SHBC:

The Historical Building code of the state of California is considered one of the "most valuable tools for the preservation of historic buildings". While the "building code makes provisions for the special treatment of historic buildings, SHBC amplifies and codifies this protection." (California Office of Historic Preservation).

SHBC recognizes and endorses "the need to adopt reasonable alternative levels of equivalent situations where strict compliance" might "negatively affect a historic resource's appearance or jeopardize its economic viability". SHBC is noteworthy because it is essentially a performance code. It provides "framework within which

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unique solutions may be custom tailored to problems related to each unique historic resource" (California Office of Historic Preservation).

All this raises issues, and challenges which the conservation profession needs to confront, in the first half of the twenty-first century. These include:

- *-Providing efficient methods for the dissemination of information about conservation taking advantage of new developments in information technology.

- *-Maintaining professional standards, as well as high standards for training that could be recognized internationally, and developed through an international accreditation scheme.

- *-Increasing public and political awareness of conservation.

- *-Ensuring that all conservation actions are as sustainable as possible (Staniforth, S., 2000).

SUGGESTED ACADEMIC CONSERVATION COURSES:

The shortage in supply of well-trained and suitably qualified conservation staff, especially in local Governments, needs action. Qualified conservationists should be positioned, with organizations, at levels allowing them to have influence on decision making.

All this brings to attention, the imminent need for offering academic programs in historic conservation at the Undergraduate level, Post graduate level with degrees, and certificates that could be prepared for the practicing professionals.

Example of Undergraduate level courses those aiming at introducing students to the field of historic preservation, and to allow them competence in the subject, as well as giving preparatory instruction to those intending to continue their post graduate studies in this field (Eastern Michigan University Preservation Program, 2001).

Example of Post graduate level for a Master's degree in Historic Preservation, such program would concentrate on "practical craft skill training with academic study of building pathology, decay processes, conservation strategies and techniques, as well as the philosophies that underpin the repair, restoration and renovation of ancient buildings that form the cultural heritage" (Induni's, B., 2000).

Example of Non degree certification in Historic Preservation: Courses designed to meet "the needs of individuals such as in service planners, historic district commissioners or those in career transition who wish to improve their knowledge and competence in the field of historic preservation without pursuing a Master's degree"(Eastern Michigan University Historic Preservation Program, 2001).

There is also the possibility of offering part time MS c & CPD short courses in the Structure and Decay of Ancient and Historic Materials to promote a greater understanding of the nature and degradation of ancient and historic objects. "This program is intended for museum and conservation scientists as well as established professionals, as conservators and conservation technicians"(University of Bradford, 2001).

Distance Education Courses:

Distance education courses could, also, be offered using a combination of print and text materials, CD ROM and web resources to allow the interaction between the student, the instructor and the other participants.

Example of this is the Conserving Historic Structures course that could be offered to allow the participants developing abilities in identifying building materials, and systems used in heritage structures. In addition to the analysis of the nature, and extent of deterioration in historical buildings, and the study of the environmental factors contributing to deterioration. That beside ways of investigating and documenting physical conditions of the structures, and selecting conservation strategies according to the intended use of the structure, while managing all these processes.

The course study encourages participants to work with a local historic building or structure as a focus for learning activities and assignments, (University of Victoria, Canada, 2001).

CONCLUSION:

Historic environment has been recognized to be one of the main fundamentals of cultural heritage and an "irreplaceable record" (English Heritage, 2000) that contributes to the understanding of "both the present and the past" (The Scottish Office, 2002). It adds quality to our lives and helps reinforce a sense of local, regional, and national identity. It should, also, be recognized as one of the main issues in "safeguarding and promoting environmental, social and economic well-being- the three key objectives of sustainable development" (Lambrick, G, 2000).

In order to manage change of the historic environment joined up efforts between the Government and other concerned bodies should be stressed. A holistic approach to managing the historic environment means a more inclusive approach allowing local people to present their views, and make greater contributions.

As the conservation of historic environments needs funds, the promotion of heritage tourism could generate the revenues needed for protecting, and preserving our natural, historic and cultural resources in order to enhance the economic well being, and quality of life of all residents.

The following recommendations are suggested:

- 1-Government agencies responsible for historic conservation should promote a historic preservation ethic through preservation education and demonstrating leadership and stewardship for historic preservation.
- 2-Greater media publicity, and concerned organizations seminar arranging to increase public awareness, and to promote the interest and participation of people.
- 3-The provision of a wide variety of incentive in order to motivate repair and rehabilitation of historic buildings. These could include tax credits and deductions.
- 4-An annual awards and grants system for organizations and agencies whose contributions provide outstanding, excellent work in historic preservation.

5-Well-funded research in fields related to historic environment.

6-Raising the expertise of the staff working in conservation through better resources for training, and allowing the suitably qualified experienced ones to work at levels in which they can exert more influence on decision making.

7-Offering academic courses to architectural students in historic conservation, at the undergraduate level for those who want to specialize in the field, post graduate level, and non degree level short courses, for professionals in order to promote a greater understanding of the nature and degradation of Ancient and Historic objects.

8-Offering distance learning courses to enhance the understanding of heritage structures, systems and materials characteristics, and provide the frameworks for planning and managing appropriate conservation processes.

As the importance of the historic environment is recognized, and the benefits it generates justifies the costs for its preservation, we need to acknowledge that sustaining, and conserving this value for future generations to enjoy and appreciate, should be considered the responsibility of all of us.

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