

# Synergies for World Heritage

**Calogero Bellanca** | [calogero.bellanca@uniroma1.it](mailto:calogero.bellanca@uniroma1.it)

Sapienza University of Rome

**Susana Mora Alonso-Muñoz** | [susana.mora@upm.es](mailto:susana.mora@upm.es)

Universidad Politecnica de Madrid

## Abstract

In this paper we want to describe current as well as heritage classifications and their effectiveness as tools to protect and preserve heritage sites in the official documents that have been written in those years.

We want to emphasize that there is no inherent difference between the heritage values concealed in movable, immovable and intangible heritage assets. We are dealing with the same values differently expressed, interwoven with values of other sectors within development in one and the same spatial concept. Moreover, all heritage exists “somewhere”. Festivities, narratives, habits and customs are undertaken “somewhere” by a local population and locations that are meaningful for it. Local population makes no difference between the perception of landscape, town or village, or of movable heritage items in their churches, mosques, temples and museums, or of festivals, customs, habits and tales which live on in.

They perceive this as a single synthetic whole, not segmented into analytic, rational categories of “immovable”, “movable” and “intangible”.

This leads us to the insight that the interpretation and implementation of heritage values needs to take place across all heritage sectors together in an integral heritage approach, in which the responsible make take a common approach and forge the necessary synergies.

## Keywords

Synergies, Common approach, No differences, Heritage assets, Not segmented.

## Background

After the Declaration “Patrimonio Mundial de la Humanidad” in 1972, definitions and concepts have evolved, as the “Outstanding universal value” (“valor universal excepcional”)

The classification: Natural (Material/Immaterial) - Cultural (Immobile/Mobile)

has changed, and in La Vanoise (March 1996), was mentioned the possibility of unifying set of criteria, notions of integrity and authenticity, going to a holistic document, an outstanding response to the universal nature of heritage<sup>1</sup>.

In Amsterdam, 1998, it was said that “the artificial break between “Cultural” and “Natural” created problems for identification, evaluation and ultimately conservation”.

And so, an in-depth discussion took part on:

Application of the “conditions of integrity” *versus* “test of authenticity”.

Question of a unified or harmonized set of criteria.

The notion of outstanding universal value and its application in different regional and cultural contexts<sup>2</sup>.

The criteria should accommodate different perceptions of what might be of “outstanding universal value”

It was said that the lack of representativity of the World Heritage List derived partly from a lack of understanding. And in this direction the represent of IUCN (Mr. Lucas, Mexico) sees World cultural inscription as a tool for achieving recognition for groups of people and their heritage<sup>3</sup>.

In 2004 there were 6 criteria for cultural heritage and 4 for natural heritage, united in 2005 to 10 criteria, together cultural and natural heritage. The following were added:

Including human interaction with the environment; including the words “and/or spiritual”; including traditional protection and management.

The conditions of integrity and authenticity be linked and related to each criterion as appropriate in the Operational Guidelines.

Integrity includes wholeness and completeness, applied as one common approach to all sites. And participants from India (Mr. K. Rao) recognise that visual integrity is an important notion to be investigated<sup>4</sup>.

### **Working in the significance of “Outstanding Universal Value”**

The World Heritage Convention was appreciated due to its sufficiently general character that allowed for interpretation according to evolving values, and for the identification of uniqueness and/or representation of heritage resources in the different regions of the world.

Outstanding universal value should be interpreted as an outstanding response to issues of universal nature common to or addressed by all human cultures. Identification of the outstanding universal value of heritage sites can only be made through systematic thematic studies, based on scientific research according to themes common to different regions or areas. Should be based on an anthropological approach, and the themes should be formulated in a manner that allows responses to be identified in the different cultures and regions. And given importance to human creativity, and relationship with environment.

In comparative studies, like should be compared with like, and the aim should be to identify the most outstanding representatives of a kind, in a cultural or physical region. Comparison may be done on a global basis if similar sites are not found in the region.

Properties meeting one or more of the 10 criteria could potentially be considered as having Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). Additionally have to meet the test of Integrity and the test of Authenticity<sup>5</sup>.

All this make grew renewed and fresh interest in protecting heritage. May be the interest have been in so many different subjects, very difficult to understand them, with so many different rules to protect them in so different cultures.

### **Tradition and human creative capacity**

The human creative capacity is expressed in the culture, which is the product as well as the generator of human cultural expressions. Cultural expressions resulting from human creative actions are subject to diversification. Once created, past creativity endures in the cultural expressions whether physical or intangible, becoming part of the traditional continuity as well as a potential source of later creativity. Due to communication, different forms of culture can be associated with specific identity and become accepted by members of a community over generations thus forming traditions.

Tradition is defined as a belief passed down within a group or society with symbolic meaning or special significance with ancient origins.

The question here is about a reference to the tradition and the traditional belief system of a society influencing any construction created to meet the needs of that society. Through such creative process, while respecting the general identity offered by the cultural context, each product assumes its own specific significance. Considering that the creative process generated within a cultural context is an intangible force in the society, also the significance associated with the cultural expressions is intangible<sup>6</sup>.

According to this traditional belief society it has not sense to separate tangible and intangible, and mobile with immobile heritage. Associated with tangible attributes, intangible attributes first express the history of the site, the creativity of its erection and the way of life of its inhabitants.

### **The problem of limits**

Another problem is to decide how large may be the protection of the “element”. A settlement, an historic urban or rural area, is formed of a tissue or fabric. In its latin origin context refers to the way the structure of the setting is woven together. Symbolically we can understand a settlement as a tissue or fabric, place in its setting with historically defined relationships. While the setting refers to a particular place and the relationships with its surroundings, the context describes how these different components are woven together forming a discourse, the significance of which is reflected in the social, cultural economic functional relationships of the place<sup>7</sup>.

So setting and context are so important for the inscription in the World Heritage List, and for the World Heritage Operational Guidelines that must be concretely defined<sup>8</sup>.

In the years 1977-2017 there has been a growing concern for the undesired changes taking place in the surroundings of recognised heritage areas. UNESCO and the Council of Europe established strategies, many years ago, during the 1960s and 1970s, synthesised in 1975, introducing the notion of integrated urban conservation. Methodology tested in Bologna, Ferrara... And we must not forget it. Join it with urban planning and land planning. Criteria must be clear, independent of the country.

Properties listed as World Heritage, (at the beginning with historic monuments, archaeological sites, aesthetic masterpieces, then intangible expressions of heritage) cannot be protected in a separate way. Cannot be safe-

guarded without considering their setting and context<sup>9</sup>. Dealing with “historic” areas, social, cultural and economic recovery cannot be properly managed based on an integrated territorial approach.

### **Some cases and Conclusion**

In Spain, Alhambra de Granada, Generalife and Albaicin, were declared World Heritage in 1984, and extended in 1994. But its setting and context are in relationship with other monuments in Granada. So probably the definition of the delimitation of what part of the city must be declared, may be reviewed.

History, origins, ...art... relation with the river Darro, sky, colours, sounds, singings...

In Brussels, The Grand Place was declared in 1998. Houses from Victor Horta in 2000, and also processional itineraries as Meyboom and Ommegang.

In contrast, Val di Noto in Italy was declared on 26 June 2002, including eight cities.

Segovia has included in 1985, the old city bounded by the walls, and the aqueduct. It's clear because the orographic situation, but outside there are some important monasteries as Monasterie of Parral, Santa Cruz, and romanic churches as San Justo, San Lorenzo.

Tarragona is another example where the roman monuments as circus, amphitheatre, forum, are declared, but is very difficult to understand the town, and even to conserve it

Is very difficult to protect World Heritage if it is not clearly defined in its limits, without necessity of *bufera*, but coordinate with Urbanistic Plans. An emphasis must be given to know historic territory and recognising its social and cultural significance.

Emphasised people-centred approach does not mean that conservation expert should be ignored.



Fig. 1 Tarragona Amphitheatre, Image by the author.



Fig. 2 Tarragona Roman circus, Spain. Image by the author.



Fig. 3 Roman Aqueduct, Segovia, Spain. Image by the author.

- <sup>1</sup> The Expert Meeting at Parc de la Vanoise, France, 22-24 March 1996, in Report of the World Heritage Global Strategy Natural and Cultural Heritage Expert Meeting, Amsterdam 1998, p.1.
- <sup>2</sup> *Report of the World Heritage Global Strategy Natural and Cultural Heritage Expert Meeting*, Amsterdam, The Netherland, 25-29 March 1998, p.14.
- <sup>3</sup> JUKKA JOKILEHTO, *Valuation of the Built Heritage « Modern Conservation»*, 7, 2019, pp 11-18.
- <sup>4</sup> JUKKA JOKILEHTO, *Context and Setting of Protected Areas «Modern Conservation»* ICOMOS Serbia National Committee, 8-9, 2021, pp. 13-20.
- <sup>5</sup> *The World Heritage List: Filling the Gaps-an Action Plan for the Future*, ICOMOS Monuments and Sites XII, 2005.
- <sup>6</sup> JUKKA JOKILEHTO, *Context and Setting of Protected Areas «Modern Conservation»* ICOMOS Serbia National Committee, 8-9, 2021, pp.13-20.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibidem.
- <sup>8</sup> Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World heritage Convention, 2015 edition, art. 49.
- <sup>9</sup> ICOMOS 2005, *Xian Declaration on the Conservation of the Setting of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas*, (Art.2). Xian, China.