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Heritage and Tourism, PIA and Global Interests

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Guest Editorial

Cultural Heritage and Tourism: A Public Interest Approach – Introduction

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Today, the term 'heritage' is used in a confusingly wide range of meanings. At its simplest, heritage means 'anything that has been inherited' (Aitchison et al. 2000:95). In many ways, the evolution of the concept has reflected the changing attitudes to the past held by successive generations. As a social phenomenon, cultural heritage is highly reflective of the society in which it is created and valued. Nations and other socio-cultural groups have a collective identity grounded in past events and elements that are deemed significant to it. Heritage, employed in the cultural arena, can be used to describe material forms such as monuments, historical or architectural remains, and artefacts on display in museums or immaterial forms – 'intangible heritage' (Nas 2002) – such as philosophy, tradition and art in all their manifestations; the celebration of great events or personalities in history; distinctive ways of life; and education as expressed, for example, through literature and folklore.

The emergence of heritage as a contemporary cultural construction is part of the expansion of the tourism industry, but it must also be seen within the wider context of developments in cultural production and consumption (Aitchison, et al. 2000:97). The consumption of heritage has become an important element of our cultural life. Currently, many countries develop cleverly scripted versions of their cultural and historic inheritance, and project those invented stories through their legendary sites and sights of tourism. When communities, nations, and even entire continents are made real or authenticated in or by tourism, they consti-

tute ideologically constructed places and iconologically appropriate spaces: imagination and re-imagination in the business of tourism and representation and evocation in public culture are so frequently coterminous agendas. Hobsbawm and Ranger (1992) have done pioneering work in demystifying the 'invented' and 'contested' nature of tradition.

Heritage tourism has become a rather elastic term applied by some to 'almost anything about the past that can be visited' (Richter 1999:108). Such tourism may involve museums, historic districts, re-enactments of historical events, statues, monuments and shrines. Heritage tourism involves a wide range of activities that use aspects of historicity in various ways (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996:62). Heritage and tourism are collaborative industries; heritage converting locations into destinations and tourism making them economically viable as exhibits themselves (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998:151). Heritage tourism can be considered part of cultural tourism as the increasing significance of the economic imperative for cultural tourism development is clear within the analysis of the growth of the heritage industry.

Tourism is recognized more and more as an agent of social and cultural change, especially for indigenous communities. In many cases, tourism has been identified as both a force for cultural enrichment or rejuvenation and the loss of cultural integrity. The struggle over heritage tourism reflects its growth and success (Richter 1999:109). Cultural heritage management, for example,

is often seen as a tool to maximize the use of the cultural heritage of a community, region, country, or even continent within the global tourism market. At the same time, there is a global fascination with downsizing the public sphere while increasing privatization of goods and services. Cultural heritage tourism has reflected this trend, becoming more entrepreneurial and entertainment-oriented.

Cultural Heritage and its Publics

The paradigm of heritage as common inheritance is problematic, as is the perceived relationship between heritage and history. The conferring of 'heritage' status, commodification, and the marketing of symbols of the past involves an inherent selectivity that promotes certain value systems over others. In a multicultural society, the very act of inheritance itself is problematic as the passing on of cultural symbols from generation to generation within one group will inevitably suggest a 'disinheritance' within another (non-participatory, marginalized group). All inheritance is 'someone's heritage and therefore logically not someone else's' (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996:21).

The very substance of heritage is a political construction of what is remembered – different for many groups in a society. Heritage tourism as public culture becomes clear in the fashions by which governments and interested parties capture national capitals, towns, villages, museums, art galleries, ancient temples, monuments, festivals and other interpreted performances in order to project the celebrated narratives and/or the ordinary vistas of

a given people, its places, and its pasts. Not surprisingly, this is a growing arena for political conflict. Multiple publics are using many historic sites, buildings, and objects. These various publics have multiple interests which might sometime conflict with one another. 'Heritage dissonance' derives from cultural, social, and political arenas of human discord, locally, nationally, and globally (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996). The wishes of such public sector organizations as UNESCO bring socio-economic development, cultural conservation and revivification, exchange and interaction between communities and groups, and delivering education. Meanwhile, the tourist industry's needs are for new attractions and new commercial enterprises.

If heritage is to be promoted and made more visible, and especially if the motive is to deliver socio-economic and developmental benefits, then routinely international organizations lead the initiative (Moulin and Boniface 2001:238). They act, so they believe, in the public interest. The macro-scale is what characterizes their heritage effort. Their general work is to decide strategies to achieve objectives and to find vehicles of implementation to be applied from the top, by a trickle-down and often very bureaucratic process, to arrive eventually at the individual situation of a heritage site and its surrounding community along with outside visitors.

However, despite the growing influence of global regulatory bodies such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the

International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), and the World Monument Fund (WMF), it is in the local circumstances that heritage is engaged with, interpreted, represented, and woven into the fabric of daily life of those communities that reside within the vicinity (Long 2000). Because groups and communities are increasingly aware of the symbolic importance of their representation in heritage sites, interest group activity has concentrated on issues of what is saved, destroyed, and interpreted. There can be a strong division of opinion about the preservation of heritage. Not everybody agrees about what kind of culture should be presented, or for whom. Conflicts have arisen over the development and interpretation of heritage attractions (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996). Nevertheless, many interests are compatible. There is a necessity to have a venue were publics can interact with one another. The process by which heritage tourism has begun to include more and more groups is barely examined (Richter 1999:116).

The political power of various groups may well control not only whose interpretation and definition of authenticity prevails but also what will be saved or remembered at all (Richter 1999:118-19). Native peoples are increasingly taking charge of the disposition, handling, access, ownership, and interpretation of their patrimony – whether artifacts or performances – the spaces in which they live, and their ways of life (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998:165). Some communities are seizing the tourism initiative by creating an affordable, tourist-friendly heritage. This increase in community involvement in heritage management changes the way in which we understand and define heritage, and the role experts play in heritage and its management (Smith et al. 2003). After all, not everyone is enamoured with the interpretations minorities have placed on heritage sites within their control.

Tourists, who now have an unprecedented opportunity to interact with and make an impact on the sites at many heritage destinations, are also transforming sites. At the same time, the place itself has an increased ability to control and manipulate the tourist's visit

(Richter 1999:122). In a sense, the process by which tourists absorb the experience has been democratized. A new expectation of participation is being forged between the tourist and the heritage site, with either able to initiate the communication. As a result, a new role for tourism is needed to repair the breakdown in knowledge and understanding between the peoples of the world. In other words, tourism can be an important conveyor of meaning about the realities by or within which people live.

The degree of coordination and/or integration between policy departments within the cities' local authorities, e.g. between the economic, social, cultural, and tourism spheres, is an important aspect of local level processes relating to the development of cultural heritage attractions. The broad public also benefits when science and scholarly research supports heritage tourism (e.g. Rowan and Baram 2004). However, in order to do so, scholars have to make the effort to convert the dry scientific detail of their research into a narrative of everyday language for the public to benefit directly.

Public Interest Anthropology (PIA)
As described above, previous research demonstrates how cultural heritage is packaged for public consumption at highly formal, institutionalized levels such as government publications, museums, and the sites themselves (AlSayyad 2001; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998). However, a public interest approach to cultural heritage breaks from this 'top-down' model as it fails to account for another, more informal sphere of heritage discourse. Instead, heritage is identified, in its first moments, in the language that people use to make meaningful claims about their past, meanings that subsequently embody material culture and practices such as performance and tourism.

Understanding cultural heritage as an objectifying process permits a recognition of its powerful role in motivating heritage tourism in local and global contexts. Although tourists possess differing motives for visiting cultural heritage sites, people who live in and around heritage sites possess their own representations and attachments that

are often unrecognized. Instead, powerful local, national, and international interest groups impose formal representations that agree with their economic and ideological agendas, sustainability and preservation being only two. These agendas can lead to conflict between promoters, tourists, and local groups, possibly ending in alienation and, in worst circumstances, violence.

Given its sensitivity to conflict and dialogue within civil society, 'Public Interest Anthropology' (PIA) is rightly poised to examine ensuing conflicts in the global proliferation of cultural heritage tourism. PIA places civil society at the center of analysis, investigating how groups form and conflict with other groups in the promotion of their interests (Sanday 2003). An important aspect of PIA is participatory action research, where the scholar acts as both researcher and public advocate, aggressively investigating the reasons for conflict, presenting their findings to all parties, and participating—when invited—in consensus building. At the same time, the scholar remains aware of disparities in power across involved groups and seeks to readdress this imbalance in the debate. PIA merges problem solving with theory development and analysis, in the interest of change motivated by a commitment to social justice, racial harmony, equality, human rights and wellbeing. As scholarship and advocacy combined, PIA offers a powerful research design with which to explore cultural heritage tourism anew, providing the scholar with a means to further the goals of anthropological inquiry while promoting conflict resolution and dialogue in civil society.

Case Studies
All papers in this special issue on public interest anthropology applied to cultural heritage and tourism were originally presented at the 102nd 'Resolving conflicts in heritage tourism: A public interest approach' (Porter et al. 2004). The panel took up the general conference theme, 'Peace', in an exploration of heritage, tourism, and the ways public interest anthropology can address proliferating conflicts arising in tourism at heritage sites. Each author addresses a diverse assortment of themes intersecting

with tourism, heritage, and the public interest, analyzing how groups formulate heritage identities and translate these identities into representations and special interests.

The first contribution is by Linda Scarangella, who shows how a tourist site makes people negotiate representations and discourses of their place, identity and cultural heritage. She provides a detailed micro-analysis of performers at *hiwus* feasthouse – a Salish longhouse on Grouse Mountain, Vancouver, Canada. By examining this particular tourist site as a micro-global space of negotiation, where corporate, national, and local representations of culture and identity compete, Scarangella shows how community members connect to the local or 'place' within the context of globalization and the constraints of the tourist industry. By reclaiming narratives of 'nature' and 'place,' Salish performers make implicit political statements about indigenous relationships to the land and their relationship to the larger national-global community. Thus, *hiwus* provides Salish community members with an opportunity to reclaim discourses of identity, culture, and heritage whilst increasing public support for larger political issues, such as land claims.

Scarangella's case study offers an example of how a PIA approach may lead to a better understanding of tourist sites as spaces where tensions and conflicts are negotiated. By considering the *hiwus* feasthouse as a 'public sphere' where social, cultural, and political relationships are worked out, she shows the agency of Salish performers to reclaim representations of culture and heritage through their performance and to transform them into meaningful experiences of identity and culture. Salish individuals utilize the tourist encounter as a space of empowerment, as an opportunity to educate the public, change stereotypes, and reach an international (global) audience. Scarangella ends her paper with some reflections on the possible role anthropologists can play in tourism and tourism development.

Guldem Baykal Büyüksaraç discusses the ongoing public controversy over plans to build a mosque on a prominent cultural heritage site in the heart of Istanbul. Officials

believe Taksim Square – one of the most significant public places in Turkey for the display of a secular, national identity – bears much potential as a destination for domestic and international tourism. However, the square is not solely being conceived of as a symbol of national Turkish culture and identity; several publics attach a historical, political, military, and religious significance to the site. Given the multi-layered symbolic significance of the place, the square is a prime target for public controversy, leading to strong political tensions between secularists and Islamists. The cultural heritage policy of the Turkish state seems to be most challenged in the religious public sphere. Much of the controversy focuses on what should be the dominant image of a significant public urban place.

Taksim square offers itself as an interesting case to represent how a public space is unceasingly remade and reconstructed through the ongoing struggle on its morphology and symbolism. Different representations and identifications that transgress the official iconography have accumulated on the square and changed its public character. The issue at stake is not only 'who owns or dominates the site'; the very access to the square is a political struggle between different cultural and ethical discourses which are marked by conflicting claims of identity and heritage as well as incongruent historical memories. Baykal's paper offers an interesting case of how different conceptions of cultural identity and heritage, along with different readings of the past, shape a political debate of the present. At the same time, the case study nicely illustrates how the final identity and representation of a cultural heritage site is the result of complex negotiations between a variety of publics.

Morag Kersel and Christina Luke focus on the growing intersection between archaeological scholarship and the tourism industry. They describe how the cultural heritage of a region is made marketable by archaeological research and then co-opted – kidnapped and commoditized – by Western tourism and the international antiquities market. They argue that scholarship provides a key

framework for site preservation and tourism development. Archaeological interpretation – assigning sites and objects cultural meaning – impacts which areas and items are protected, reconstructed, exhibited and replicated, directly influencing the replica industry in particular and the entire cultural heritage tourism market in general. Replicas are good examples of material culture that fits into a more generalized model of producer-consumer relations intricately connected to the rise of the growing tourism industry and the commodification of history.

Kersel and Luke's ideas play out when investigating community agency through the production and sale of archaeological replicas to tourists. They consider created identity based on a constructed past and replica craft production, using examples from both Central America (El Salvador) and the Middle East (Israel). Both case studies clearly demonstrate how tourism and the production of replicas contribute to various reconstructions of the past. While local communities have become increasingly aware of their role in various aspects of tourism, scholars have been slow to engage them where they conduct archaeological research. As the tourism industry becomes larger, the archaeological community must take a more active role in public advocacy. Kersel and Luke therefore urge scholars to engage more actively in public interest anthropology, thus ensuring the continued preservation and accurate reconstruction of the past for all parties.

Using their public interest archaeological project in Cerro la Cruz, Peru, as a case study, Melissa Vogel and David Pacifico examine the responsibilities archaeologists have towards the communities in which they work. Archaeological projects affect the communities near their work not only during their stay, but also for years to come. In Peru, for example, the direct relationship between heritage, archaeology, and tourism is essential to the economic well-being of Peruvians. Yet, the goals of archaeologists are not always shared or even understood by the communities in which they work and individual researchers encounter difficul-

ties when tackling archaeological questions that prompt their research while addressing the needs and interests of communities. Economic difficulties and cultural misunderstandings between foreign researchers and local communities can turn difficult situations into dangerous working environments.

Using a public interest approach – recognizing the importance of relations with local people – brings various ethical and practical dilemmas to the surface. Residents are recognized as the descendent community and primary stakeholder of the cultural heritage under study; therefore, their needs and interests are taken into consideration. They are also seen as consultants, experts in the local environment and recent history. This implies that flexibility is essential in trying to meet the community's needs. The specific methodologies employed in various public interest archaeological projects differ greatly as the needs of the local community will always shape the outcome of a public interest approach. Vogel and Pacifico's applied work demonstrates that anthropologists in general have much to learn from public interest archaeologists.

Finally, Anne Pyburn draws a common thread in the four case studies and suggests topics for future PIA research. She argues that all of the papers address the issue of responsibility to the public, not only identifying problems but also providing the reader with tentative solutions. According to Pyburn, all four studies are concerned with understanding how management of cultural resources influences the lives of descendant communities and stakeholders outside the academy. The different case studies reveal that different stakeholders approach the tourist market differently. One question requiring more attention is how we scholars can inspire local interest in heritage and cultural resource management. In the process of giving voice to unrepresented stakeholders, we should be weary not to create oppressive conditions for others. When local stakeholders possess the knowledge they need about their audience and have collaborated with other stakeholders in promoting the vision

of their past best suited to their needs, less problems are expected to arise.

In any scheme of tourist development the first questions to address are what image of the past should be imparted and to whom. Pyburn advocates for closer collaboration between diverse stakeholders, including the governments that design local policy, and the foreign aid associations that ostensibly promote economic development. Understanding the origin and repercussions of debates about representation is exactly what anthropologists need to research. However, she points out that, if one is truthful to the principles of PIA, this also admits the possibility that there are situations in which anthropological research may not be appropriate. Pyburn ends her discussion with a powerful plea directed at anthropologists to move out of the ivory tower. In her words, 'it is time for anthropology, in all its many subdisciplines, to take the lead in the global conversation on human rights'. We hope that the readers of this issue will take her call at heart...

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