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THE FARO CONVENTION, A NEW PARADIGM FOR SOCIALLY - AND CULTURALLY - SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE ACTION?

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Abstract: This paper explores the centrality of heritagebased cultural activity to sustainable development, within the frame of the Faro Convention on the 'Value of Cultural Heritage for Society'. It offers examples from France and the Balkans of successful ways to interweave heritage and culture into place-based and landscapesensitive strategies for social sustainability

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I. CHALLENGES: PUTTING CULTURE IN SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability at environmental, social and economic levels is the biggest global challenge of the 21st century, but new approaches are urgently needed. Culture as an aspect of sustainable development may

be gaining increasing attention from scholars and policy makers, but 'cultural sustainability' is still a relatively new phenomenon in science. Work in our European 'COST' network that investigates the place of culture within sustainable development (http://www.culturalsustainability.eu/) has shown that although many researchers are already focused on issues related to culture and sustainability, very few studies have so far considered culture in an analytical and explicit way within the frame of sustainability (Soini and Birkeland, 2014). Similarly, very little research uses the concept of 'cultural sustainability' in parallel with ecological, social or economic sustainability models (e.g. Hawkes 2001; Throsby 2008; Duxbury & Gillette 2007, Kagan 2011).

One challenge for incorporating culture into sustainable development is that 'culture' can be taken to mean almost anything; it is therefore difficult to treat analytically within the discourse of sustainable devel-

opment. Despite these challenges, it is increasingly clear that inter - and transdisciplinary approaches are needed to better understand and use culture to tackle the societal and environmental challenges (e.g. Science Europe 2013; Kagan 2011).

The role of culture as a component of sustainable development is also being increasingly discussed in policy debates. UNESCO emphasised the importance of culture during the Decade of Culture and Development (1988-1998) and through its Conventions (e.g. on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions 2005; for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003; concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage 1972). It is currently working towards the objective of including culture in the UN Post 2015 Millennium Development Goals (UNESCO Hangzhou Declaration, May 2013). At the "regional level", in Europe both the Council of Europe's Landscape Convention and its Faro Convention imply more culturally-sensitive approaches.

There are also bottom up initiatives. Several NGOs promote culture as an aspect of sustainable development. To give one example, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) has worked to promote culture as an aspect of sustainable development within the 2004 Agenda 21 for Culture (http://www.agenda21 culture.net/). Interest in more place-sensitive policies is also growing, notably in their ability to take greater account of local natural and cultural circumstances and people's preferences. This can be illustrated by cases related to environmental policy practices, the development of livelihoods based on local environmental and cultural resources, and new forms of governance. Place-based, or more culturally-sensitive, approaches can increase the efficiency of resource use

as well as promoting social inclusion (e.g. Barca, 2009). Despite such initiatives, however, beyond the cultural sector the role of culture in sustainability policies has been mostly neglected.

Against this background we may ask which issues connect cultural heritage and sustainability. Heritage, both tangible and intangible, is usually named as a key issue when culture is considered as an aspect of sustainability (Soini & Birkeland 2014). Heritage is also often considered as an asset for social cohesion and sense of place, in addition to having its own value. Although it is easy to agree that heritage in all its forms, including the associated memories, should be preserved, at practical levels we need to ask how heritage sustains our societies? How can different, often conflicting, perceptions related to heritage be recognised and accommodated? What is the relationship between heritage and memory, after all?

A possible answer to such questions is offered by the Council of Europe's 'Framework' Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, known as the Faro Convention (Council of Europe 2005). Unlike most heritage conventions, 'Faro' is not concerned with how to protect heritage but why: what are the social and cultural benefits, indeed imperatives, in doing so. Faro regards heritage as cultural activity writ large.

II. EVERYTHING, EVERYWHERE: PRINCIPLES AND IDEAS FROM THE FARO CONVENTION

Since its publication in 2005, the Faro Convention has been ratified by 15 countries, and signed (the first step towards ratification) by six more. Three of these

21 countries are western European but significantly, perhaps indicative of Faro's relevance to identity, most of them are countries forging themselves anew after the break-up of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. Many participants at the 2013 CCCS conference in Skopje came from countries whose governments have ratified or signed it, and a discussion panel was therefore organised by members of the COST network on cultural sustainability, which was holding one of its twice-yearly meetings in Skopje that week, to address the question of how 'Faro' helps introduce heritage and memory into culture based sustainability.

What does 'Faro' actually say? First, it takes the broadest possible definition of cultural heritage: intangible as well as tangible, perceptual as well as physical, action, performance, custom and behaviour as well as objects and buildings. For this convention, heritage is not just an aspect of tourism but is central to everyday, ordinary 'real' life, local as well as universal. It sees heritage as a process, and what is more, as a continuing process, of creating, constructing, using and modifying heritage; in a sense heritage is redefined by Faro as a verb, not a noun (Fairclough 2009, 29). This emphasis on process rather than product highlights heritage's relevance to sustainability. Processes involve debate and interactions; especially in relation to the transmission and use of inherited resources, processes are necessarily always continuing. Like sustainability, the journey may be more important than the destination.

The Faro Convention (following the lead of the European Landscape Convention) also puts people's values, aspirations and needs first, and celebrates the diversity and plurality of their views and values. It is thus quite different to earlier documents such as the Venice Charter, the Grenada and Valetta conventions,

and the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, which were most concerned with how to protect the physical fabric of special monuments, buildings or places; Faro in contrast takes a people-centred approach, and focuses on the people who construct, use and celebrate (or oppose) heritage. It reminds us forcefully of every citizen's right (a human right) to their own heritage and to participation in cultural life. It is equally forceful in asserting that these rights are balanced by responsibilities at individual and collective level to respect and protect the cultural heritage and the cultural memory of other groups. In the words of the convention, 'everyone, alone or collectively, has the responsibility to respect the cultural heritage of others as much as their own heritage'.

Many things arise from this position. Heritage is most often defined as the "best" buildings and monuments. Rarely are these located where most people live, 'here'; too often they are - almost it seems by definition - somewhere else, 'there'; people might visit them on holiday but this type of heritage is not part of the everyday landscape of their normal lives. If heritage is thus defined as 'elsewhere', there is a risk that it will unintentionally become an instrument of exclusion. It can however become an instrument of inclusion and commonality if, following Faro, it is defined contextually as local, lived-in, 'ordinary' (so-called actually it is often extraordinary at the local level), if it is seen as a legacy from our predecessors rather than more narrowly from ancestors, and if it is recognised as an element of both shared identity and differentiation (Wolferstan & Fairclough 2013).

The Faro Convention invites us to argue that a heritage that is everywhere and relevant to everyday life is likely to be one of the preconditions for genuine

sustainability, at the social and cultural level but probably also at economic and environmental levels. Faro gives a glimpse of how such a socially-embedded concept of heritage might work. Responsibility towards cultural heritage is not the exclusive domain of experts. It should also be exercised (as in daily life it often is) by individuals and by heritage communities: by people who share values about specific aspects of cultural heritage to be sustained and transmitted to future generations, by people who share *landscapes* (see, eg, Shelley et al 2011). This means democratic participation "to involve *everyone* in society in the ongoing process of defining and managing cultural heritage", to preserve heritage not for its own sake, but for explicit and broad social benefit.

Faro arrives at a time when the idea and practice of heritage is in transition. In many countries, the longstanding symbiosis between heritage and nationality is breaking up, as populations become more culturally mixed (see, eg, Holtorf and Fairclough 2013, 197-8) and as nation states become increasingly subordinate in one direction to localism and in the other to various forms of more global community.

Thus a new heritage paradigm is becoming visible. In the traditional view, material things were privileged, and values were based on supposedly-intrinsic properties or represented a national history. This was a paradigm that encouraged the reduction of heritage to tourism and consumption. In contrast, the emerging new paradigm puts the production of heritage in the foreground, and aims to encompass greater democratic participative action, with greater concern for the local and the everyday. It uses the concept of landscape

that is promoted European Landscape Convention (increasingly popular in academia and policy) as a global frame for heritage, recognising that heritage assets and objects offer fundamental social and economic values and benefits far beyond those traditionally recognised. The two case studies which follow explore these themes in two very different parts of Europe.

III. BRIDGES: FROM CONFLICTED VALUES TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

The presentation of cultural heritage and its interpretation by different communities has for long been a source of conflict. Today it has become crucial for societies in the Balkans to discuss openly the "heritage that bonds and divides" (Dragićević Šešić and Dragojević, 2006). In the post-war transitional times of the region, bridges - which have always been a means to connect people - have become objects of division and conflict, a part of 'dissonant heritage' (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996). In the collective memory of the Balkans, bridges are of different significance for different communities. They figure in numerous local stories and connect with different "texts" linked to direct experience, family stories, artistic works and civil society actions.

When a 'new past' (Assmann, 2006) is constructed in local communities, there is a need to understand what values are being articulated, and how and why. Many questions arise. How can collective responsibility and competences be reinforced or created among distinct groups and members of the community towards cultural heritage? How can trust and mutual understanding be developed, including a respect for

the range of different interpretations and meanings that exist within modern complex and diverse communities in relation to cultural heritage as symbol bearer (Nas, 2011) and identity marker?

At the core of our attention are very different perspectives on the memories and narratives of bridges and the question of cultural sustainability. The interrelations and interplay between cultural heritage, memory and representations of contested identity indicate the need for new heritage and memory policies in the Balkans. In particular, bottom-up policy actions are needed to encourage trust and mutual understanding, and to bring new voices in the cultural heritage discourse.

There are now many examples of such different approaches to cultural heritage in the region. They involve the renewed perception of bridges as symbols of friendship, reconciliation and joint future life by means of civil society actions, artists' projects and interventions – in other words, and contrary to the dominant public policies and practices (Dragićević Šešić, 2011), by cultural action. During the last twenty years, numerous artistic projects have been developed within civil society movements to fight against policies of oblivion and nationalistic policies of memories, thus fostering intercultural dialogue and "bridging" the communities. Among them, three examples have been related to bridges as possible symbols or as actual forgotten "enclaves" of marginal communities.

The Ars Aevi bridge in the centre of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Fig.1), is a pedestrian bridge, the path for the inhabitants of Sarajevo's Grbavica neighbourhood (the 'Serbian part of the city') where during the war the river used to be a frontier. It was designed and inaugurated by one of the world's most famous architects, Renzo Piano. It is the first built element of

the Ars Aevi Museum of Fine Arts whose collections are the gift of famous contemporary artists to the citizens of Sarajevo, which itself thus represents bottom-up efforts of active cultural policy to contribute directly to the opening of the Bosnian artistic scene to the world. This is a good example of the creative dialogue in a community that can come from a civil society initiative, but also of artistic protest and intervention



Figure. 1 Ars Aevi bridge, Sarajevo October 2012, Enver Hadziomerspahic, performance 'Cleaning the bridge'

directed towards the policy makers. (http://www.eenc.info/organisation/ars-aevi-foundation)

The Macedonian artist Hristina Ivanoska has developed a project in Skopje, the capital of FYR Macedonia, which focuses on the invisibility of women in the naming of streets. This followed her earlier project, "Boulevard Hristina Ivanoska the Beast', which demonstrated the rarity of streets named after women. (http://europelostandfound.net/node/592) The

new project, "Naming the Bridge: Rosa Plaveva and Nakie Bajram", started in 2004 as a proposal to the local authorities of Skopje for giving a newly built bridge the names of two women, with the intention to keep the memory of the first joint action of Macedonian and Turkish women linked to literacy campaigning (Fig. 2). This project raised not only gender issues in contemporary politics, but also awareness about the

Hristina Ivanoska "Naming of the bridge: Nakie Bajram and Rosa Plaveva", 2006

Figure 2. Hristina Ivanoska, 'Naming the Bridge'

forgotten memories of intercultural dialogue which existed in the community's past.

The third example is from Serbia (http://www.modukit.com/biro/UTB01/UTB.pdf), the 'Under the Bridge' project, realised in Belgrade 2004. This project attempted to establish specific and closer relations

among activists and inhabitants through an unconventional action of walking through the city. "Under the motorway bridge" is an invisible space in the city centre where Roma and refugees had built dilapidated huts. This example also illustrates the creative re sponse to the issues of common heritage, with the aim of focusing attention on and raising awareness of these "forgotten" citizens and their neighbourhood (Fig. 3).



Figure 3. 'Under the Bridge'

These examples stand witness to how distant public authorities still are from actions invented and launched by artists, activists and ordinary citizens. The principles of the Faro Convention emphasise the importance of the common heritage of Europe, and encourage a reflection on the role of citizens in the process of defining and managing heritage within

larger environment (Fairclough, 2009), but public policies in the Balkans are still primarily linked to nation-state building. In most of the cases, these bottomup actions have not been accepted by public policies.

One of the first actions of the Council of Europe to promote the Faro Convention is the idea of 'Faro Steps', heritage walks, which "raises public awareness through a direct experience of the place." (http:// www. coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritge/ Identities/default_en.asp). Bridges can be one type of heritage that encourages these actions, as they connect people, make 'the walks' possible, and cause people 'to reflect on the value of heritage'. A second Faro initiative, the collection of examples, could also relate to the conceptualisation of projects which would help further enhancement of the Convention, especially in three priority areas: strengthening social cohesion, improving people's quality of life and expanding democratic participation. In this sense, social and heritage projects could be interwoven while being implemented locally, as the project 'Under the bridge' has shown. Bridges are often symbols of 'heritage communities 'and their destiny is significant for the life of the community itself. But such projects and actions a storytelling, heritage walks, sound-walks and other forms of participative action projects carried out by artists and citizens need more supported from public authorities than is usually the case in the Balkans, often due to the subversive character of these actions linked to the nonofficial memory interpretations.

When heritage divides local communities by its symbolic meaning, and its place in collective memory or daily practice, a consensus linked to cultural actions should be established. Those actions should deconstruct public policies showing their real intentions, involving participation of the community and re-establi-

shing memories or correcting practices, in order to secure the quality of life of all members of the community.

IV. SUBURBS: CULTURAL MEMORY AND SOCIAL COHESION

Cities in most parts of the world are currently facing major challenges, with important transformations and an increase in environmental, economic and social difficulties. Culture is often regarded in public policies as a useful tool to solve part of these problems (Auclair, 2007).

In the suburbs of Paris, often stigmatised very negatively as "the banlieue", many projects based on art and culture have been implemented by local actors (Auclair 2006, Auclair and Brunet 2008). An increasing number now seem to focus on cultural memory and although France has not yet signed the Faro Convention, it is possible to observe some changes in the methods used at a local level. A narrow concept of culture (for a long time limited to "legitimate" artistic creation and tangible heritage) has given way to a much wider vision that brings in intangible and everyday heritage, memory and landscape. There has in parallel been a shift of interest from top-down approaches to bottom-up engagement, with a greater role taken by inhabitants, alongside a greater acknowledgment of the diversity of the population. These changes raise many questions. Why is memory becoming such an important issue? For what reasons do local actors decide to enhance cultural memory, and what are their aims? What, finally, are the limits and risks of these approaches?

Towns located on the outskirts of Paris are characterised, as in many other big cities, by uncontrolled urban sprawl, massive regeneration operations when

social housing buildings are replaced, a decrease in traditional industrial activities, and the phenomenon of spatial fragmentation and social segregation. These towns are also often segmented by highways and railways, and are host to functions such as airports, sewage plants or prisons rejected by more central parts of the city. Existing social difficulties of the population are made worse by demographic changes and high inward migration from even less advantaged populations. All this only reinforces the negative stereotypes and despised image that these areas all too easily attract. The current economic, social and environmental crisis further generates fear of the future; in short, and in consequence, the inhabitants have "lost their marks". Many people tend to look backwards to the past to find some sort of reassurance or comfort, and issues related to identity problems often appear.

Against this background, several municipalities have launched or supported cultural institutions designed to promote social cohesion and sense of place. The towns of Athis Mons and Fresnes, both located on the south border of Paris, can stand in as representative examples. In trying to fight against relatively bad images (partly due to Orly airport close to Athis Mons and the big prison in Fresnes), and against being overshadowed by Paris and its overwhelming heritage, both towns have decided to valorise the ordinary, everyday heritage of their own territory. In these towns, very few elements would be considered heritage in traditional terms (no famous buildings and no touristic places to visit), but initiatives have been taken to widen the definition of heritage to include the things that are important in these districts. The main idea is to map and take into account what is significant for the inhabitant themselves. This covers both tangible and intangible elements, many types of building, such as housing of different time-periods (old town centres, small individual houses with gardens, high rise social buildings from the 1960's and 70's), exindustrial sites, the remaining nature or agriculture areas, family gardens, and (inter-connectedly) local stories, memories, traditions and social practices.

In Athis Mons, the *Maison de Banlieue et de l'Architecture* focuses on simple and ordinary architecture and tangible heritage. This cultural institution hosts regular exhibitions and publications, and offers an important library which is one of the main resource centres devoted to the "heritage of banlieue", which is opened to scholars and researchers. Different types of outdoor visits are organised on architectural, urban and heritage topics. Some are organised by experts while others are organised with the collaboration of inhabitants, who play the role of guide for the visitors.

In Fresnes, the *Val de Bièvre Ecomuseum* has a slightly different scope, and collects histories, memories and objects which form the population's heritage. Various activities take place such as exhibitions, some of which are co-produced with the inhabitants, and educational activities for the children. The topics can be related to artistic themes or connected to the everyday life of the population.

The principal goal of these institutions is to develop participation, citizenship and social cohesion, and to promote relations between generations and between different neighbourhoods. Their work creates links between past, present and future, and aims to help citizens be more concerned with and involved in the transformations of their town. Both institutions work regularly with the inhabitants. Better knowledge

and understanding of the town is supposed to increase feelings of belonging, sense of place and even pride, by changing the image the inhabitants have of their own town. The ambition is to make the inhabitants more familiar with their environment, more aware of the architecture, landscape and history of their town, and therefore to increase citizenship values.

Although all the activities developed by these two institutions seem to promote social inclusion, participation, and sense of place, projects related to cultural memory nevertheless raise a number of questions, some of which can be considered as risks (Foret, 2011). A report recently commissioned by the French government proved controversial, for example, when it proposed a national programme in the most disadvantaged urban territories with activities structured around history, memory and heritage. In spite of the interest of such a policy, several associations have expressed opposition to what they consider a sort of merchandisation and marketing of memory, a kind of new fashion used for political purposes.

History and memory can be controversial. How to avoid instrumentalisation and the manipulation of memory? Is there only one history or are there several? How do the institutions deal with these controversies? What do they show? And who decides? How independent can they be from the municipalities who sometimes want to promote an official history for political reasons, such as memory used in the context of urban regeneration projects (Auclair, in press)? Moreover, heritage and memory can sometimes be considered as a burden by the population, or if not is seen as a private concern. It may not therefore always be seen as appropriate to identify and enhance memories, or for everything to be shared and become

public. There is also a risk that promoting social and cultural diversity will heighten differences or create new tensions and divisions. Under which conditions is it possible to promote individual emancipation and collective identities without increasing social exclusion and spatial segregation?

IV. CLOSING REMARKS

This paper has started to show how heritage (that is, our inherited world, whether we call it heritage, place, landscape or something else) can be a stage for social and cultural activity targeted on increasing sustainability in all or any of its forms. It can bring people together in shared interests or cultural activity. It can be rediscovered to re-valorise places and change lifestyles; it can be a way of illuminating the lives of those at the margins of our vision. All in all, heritage can be used to reveal the rich diversity and variation within our complex, and especially our urban, modern communities, at all scales from the local upwards.

Heritage does not need to be tied to the wagon of national identities; everyone has multiple identities and many of these are defined by, and reflected in heritage. Sometimes they are contradicted by heritage, because our examples should not lead us to believe that heritage is always about consensus. Rather it is, as are landscape and culture in general, contested and conflicted as well as shared; indeed it is contested because it is shared, but contestation can be constructive. If the case studies show anything, they show that heritage, like cultural activity of any kind, is quintessentially and fundamentally about dialogue, discourse, debate, argument, persuasion. The process of heritage

requires us to listen as well as to talk, an important duality that mirrors that other duality of heritage which is crucially at the heart of the Faro Convention - that heritage is simultaneously a right and a responsibility. Rights and responsibility is a key question in the sustainability debate, and Faro speaks to us of both.

Our examples also remind us again of the great breadth of meaning hidden within those small, superficially simple words, culture, heritage and memory. All are very wide concepts, covering all domains of life in the past and in the future. Whilst they are apparently distinct ideas, however, in practice, as shown in the examples, they are, inevitably and inextricably entwined. This is why heritage must be treated as a process (long, complicated, difficult, irresolvable) not as a simple product. The most important outcome of a heritage product is not the perfectly conserved church, but the new understandings, the shared experience, the lessons and mistakes, the exchange of personal knowledge, the seeing of another person's viewpoint, that formed the process itself. It is its ability to provoke debate, and differences of opinion, that makes heritage such a useful indeed essential tool in sustainability. The case of the overlooked, ignored building suddenly 'becoming' important and valued only when it is threatened (arguably, when in the old paradigm it is declared to be heritage) is well known, but highlights this essential role of heritage.

Heritage will often and forever be contested, whether in physical or symbolic terms. It is an unavoidable result of the fact that we share our heritage with others who may see different things in it. The conflicts become stronger when our different ways of using something (when the sharing becomes wider) compete and cannot easily accommodate each other.

Contestation is also a cultural activity, however, perhaps the ultimate cultural or at least social action, and heritage affords us space and opportunity for it. The examples in this paper, following the spirit of the Faro Convention, touch on this essential cultural activity; the discourse of sharing and giving that lies at the heart of heritage and its transmission.

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