INNOVATION:

POTENTIAL OR PARIAH FOR SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE TOURISM?

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"I need someone well versed in the art of torture—do you know PowerPoint?"
INNOVATION AS A DRIVER FOR SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL TOURISM
INNOVATION / ˈɪnəvəˈteɪʃən /

- in ("into") + novus ("new")
- To make changes: do something in a new way
- Transformation of something into something new
- Renew, revitalize
UNILINEAR CULTURAL EVOLUTION

Colonial-era idea that all humans are on a single trajectory from "primitive" to civilized (defined as upper-class, Northern European)
UNILINEAR CULTURAL EVOLUTION

All humans are on a single trajectory from “primitive” to civilized (defined as upper-class, Northern European)
Selection of images for “innovation” from business and marketing power points
MARIO CANDEIAS

• General Manager, Espinas Palace Hotel, Tehran

• Iran and the Heritage Hotels Opportunity: High Octane Fuel for cultural tourism
KAZEM VAFADARI

- Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Japan
- Tourism, Sustainable Development and Revitalization of Agricultural Heritage
AGRITURISMO = SUBSISTENCE FARM THAT HAS OUTLIVED ITS USEFULNESS AND CONVERTED INTO A COUNTRY INN FOR “FARM HOLIDAY”
When we went through Florence, it was like the great flood; people and selfie sticks everywhere. ... You go to Florence, and everyone’s from somewhere else. They try to get the food out to you as quickly as possible. And that café in the piazza—it could have been in Zurich. – Informant 1, July 11, 2016

Rome was like Disneyland. – Informant 2, July 9
A structured orientation through which tourists perceive and interpret the ‘appeal’ of particular landscapes and destinations, the tourist gaze “depends upon what it is contrasted with; what the forms of non-tourist experience happen to be... particularly those based within the home and paid work.”

Site-seeing: Stonehenge (left) and the Mona Lisa in the Louvre (right)
HOSSEIN ABDOH TABRIZI

- Professor, Sharif University
- Innovative Governance and Policy Making in Tourism
Since the ratification of the World Heritage Convention in 1972, over 1000 sites have been designated as “universal value” to the “heritage of humanity” by UNESCO.
UNESCO

- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

- Founded November 1945

- Part of post-WWII reconstruction effort, which would also include:
  - Marshall Plan (1947)
  - Truman's "Point Four" (1949)
DESTRUCTION OF MOSTAR BRIDGE (BOSNIAN WAR)
RAPHAEL LEMKIN
AND THE UN GENOCIDE CONVENTION
ABU SIMBEL: BIRTH OF THE WORLD HERITAGE MOVEMENT
SAVE NUBIAN MONUMENTS STAMPS FROM AROUND THE WORLD
UNESCO: “A TRIUMPH OF INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY”
ABU SIMBEL: BIRTH OF THE WORLD HERITAGE MOVEMENT
Destruction of Bamiyan Buddhas (Afghanistan) in 2001. They were extraordinarily designated a World Heritage site that year by UNESCO (without the Taliban’s approval) as what I’ve termed a “negative World Heritage site.”
SUSTAINABILITY
SUSTAINABILITY

Ensuring present needs are met without compromising the needs of future generations. Typically understood in three “pillars”: Social, Environmental and Economic.
CRUISE SHIPS IN VENICE
MASS TOURISM: THE CRUISE SHIP

Left: Viking River Cruise ship passing St. Mark’s Square in Venice.
Above: Cruise tourists in Dubrovnik, Croatia.
CARRYING CAPACITY
LUXURY HOTELS IN SIEM REAP, CAMBODIA
THOMAS MALTHUS (1766-1834)

• British

• Wrote: “An essay in the first principle of population” (1798)
  • First person to introduce the idea of “Carrying capacity” or a “population ceiling” of the environment

• World Population in 1798 was 790 million people. We are now over 7 billion
Malthusian Catastrophe

- Quantity
- Population
- Production of food
- Malthusian catastrophe
- War, famine, disease.
ESTHER BOSERUP
THEORY OF POPULATION GROWTH

- In contrast to Malthus, instead of too many mouths to feed, Boserup emphasized the positive aspects of a large population;
- In simple terms, Boserup suggested that the more people there are, the more hands there are to work;
- She argued that as population increases, more pressure is placed on the existing agricultural system, which stimulates invention;
- The changes in technology allow for improved crop strains and increased yields.

(1910 – 1999)
The Boserupian Model
MALTHUS VS. BOSERUP

As Level Human Geography

Population Theories
HOW CAN HERITAGE TOURISM BE SUSTAINABLE?
IN YOUR OPINION, TOURISM'S IMPACTS ON HERITAGE SITES ARE:

- Very Positive: 3%
- Somewhat Positive: 27%
- Neutral: 30%
- Somewhat Negative: 37.00%
- Very Negative: 3.00%
TOURISM IS “A BLESSING AND A CURSE”
ECONOMIC FACTORS

• Tourism brings in dollars, which can be used for preservation activities

• But – problems arise when sites are dependent on tourism
  • Tourism is notoriously fickle
  • Tourism is often managed by economic paradigms, which privilege profit over protection
    • neglecting consideration of other important factors and indigenous values or ways of decision-making
  • Tourism lends itself to vertical integration
  • Often managers lack the proper skills or willingness to distribute benefits equitably
  • Environmental degradation
AWARENESS-RAISING ISSUES

• Tourism raises awareness of a site that can generate the will (and the material resources) to preserve heritage
  • Tourism interest brings with it the impetus for states to invest in heritage management (build parks, support surrounding communities, preserve heritage sights, fund archaeological restoration, etc.).

• Tourism is a way of educating the masses

• But an increase in tourism increases adverse impacts
  • Tourist visits to cultural heritage sites can educate a larger audience about diverse peoples and places. However, in the process, sites can become overcrowded, overbuilt and commodified beyond recognition.
  • High numbers of visitors who are often well-intentioned but ill-informed about cultural norms, local flora/fauna, etc., can cause a lot of damage.

• Tourist demands also sap environmental resources
  • While tourism can create a fertile environment for fostering awareness of the (monetary) value of learning about and “preserving” cultural heritage, the ecological impact of tourism on these environments has been devasting. Carrying capacities are far beyond what is sustainable and in regions where I work, the water tables are down (in part because of the tourism demand for water for pools, golf courses etc), bamboo forests are being depleted for new construction for workers coming to serve tourists
VALORIZATION

- Tourism valorizes local culture, creating intangible benefits and local impetus for preserving heritage.
- This creates revitalization movements (Wallace 1956), a form of culture change.
- Culture change is sometimes positive and sometimes negative.
  - I see in my own sites how tourism introduces a means for livelihoods but at the same time - as the practices or knowledges can become commercialized - I have seen changes come from these 'selective pressures.' I can tell that something has changed (perhaps even been lost), but I cannot know if these are bad changes, ultimately, or if these changes will result in net benefit (and qui bono is even more elusive). On the other hand, the mere presence of outsiders who are interested in "the old ways" has valorized these 'traditions' - which may have been flagging and on the verge of disappearing before they could be commercialized. And though I am habituated by my Western, white, middle-class, left wing, intellectualist background to bemoan when people cash in on their culture - why shouldn't they? Before becoming caught up in touristic trade, I doubt that the practices, and rituals, and material culture, etc that gets commercialized was being done for its intrinsic beauty (at least not always and not only for this reason). Making a living takes many forms, and the marriage of tourism is not so troubling, as the imbalance of power that seems to continue through touristic encounters from colonial and neocolonial transactions.
QUESTION 1.1

• How much do you agree with this statement: Technological innovation has produced net positive outcomes in tourism development.
"Technological innovation has increased the scale of the impacts of tourism development in terms of quantity and repetition of impactful activities. While certain advances have helped certain sectors become "sustainable", the vast majority of technological innovations merely help accelerate the pace at which localities become visited, the degree to which they are affected by tourists, and the degree to which the tourism industry can "cover up" negative impacts."

"Technological change can change the atmosphere of the place; ruin continuity with the past; and hasten the pace of getting to the place."
QUESTION 3.1

• How well have technological innovations been utilized to raise awareness or market a tourist site?
TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION AND MARKETING

• Too well.

• Oy vey.

• The internet is a game-changer.

• Maybe too well. Over-sharing in today's world has led to unprecedented levels of visitation. This might look good on the outside but this has also led to more superficial "checklist-style" tourism that does little to help local host communities and promote true appreciation of the value of objects, buildings, traditions, and landscapes.

• Instagram and Facebook photo filters being used throughout Honduras to promote certain places while leaving out key stakeholders in that process, from indigenous/mestizo communities who have had their designs appropriated without permission to researchers who would help craft more factually-based designs.

• I think there is room for improvement. For many sites, making the leap to online marketing can be confusing and costly. Smaller sites do not have the human resources to make the best least expensive choices.
ANTI-TOURISM PROTESTS: VENICE

Protests in Venice

Signs read:

“My future is Venice”

“Behind the proclamations are more hotels, more tourists, more degradation and less life for Venice and her inhabitants”
ANTI-TOURISM PROTESTS (SUMMER 2017)
ANTI-TOURISM PROTESTS
QUESTION 2.1

- Recent technological innovation has a positive effect on the conservation and protection of cultural heritage resources.
I believe that conservation should ultimately be measured in terms of physical, material results. Certain innovations have allowed us to conserve things digitally for future generations, and while we cannot stop things from deteriorating, technological innovation gives a false sense of accomplishment, allowing government and non-government actors to disregard actual policy for flashy new things.
CyArk’s Digital Preservation Process

Digital Preservation

Technology Transfer

Archiving

Education

Conservation
Clockwise: CyArk using drones; 360-degree laser scanning on Ugandan tombs; 3D scanning of Mayan tombs
TOM SELÄNNIEMI

• Director, Finnish Nature Centre HALTIA, Finland

• Professional Natives and Augmented Reality: Can Staged Authenticity be the Key to Sustainable Cultural Tourism?
POWER VS. EMPOWERMENT

- Tourism can be positive when it empowers locals...
  - tourism puts heritage sites to work
- ...But tourism development often excludes locals
  - If tourism economics are great, control of heritage and benefits therein can be coopted by corporations or non-local institutions”
- Tourism development can be very positive when done in a grassroots manner to benefit first local communities and then others. They are quite negative when they cause disenfranchisement, economic oppression, or fail to fulfill lofty promises
- If tourism gives back revenues repeatedly and directly for management bodies to sustain environments and values of heritage sites, it is possible to consider that tourism is a good source of sustainable heritage. However, in reality, heritage tourism is often being an economic resource of developers, or being a resource to provide political organizations with budget in developing countries. Cultural values are often neglected in developers’ and political bodies’ thoughts.
- When locals lose control over the site, the culture change can be negative
  - No longer for locals: use and meanings change
QUESTION 4.1

• How well are stakeholders consulted when new technology or innovative techniques are integrated into tourism industry practice?
CONCLUSION / RECOMMENDATIONS
RECOMMENDATIONS

• No one-size-fits-all fix
• Educate all stakeholders
• Empower indigenous communities
EDUCATION / MEANING-MAKING

• Heritage sites gain meaning when people visit them and experience them; not a means in and of itself. Different people experience them, and these experiences are qualitatively different.

• Tourism is critical for heritage sites; without tourists, who would sites be aimed at?

• [We] may consider these sites as loci of identity, places where meanings are constructed and contested. Thus, researchers may uncover, through their investigations, political dynamics that sustain or fragment particular cultural identities. Such sites may also constitute a "density" of ideologies (if more than one group is represented), such that important exchanges such as interreligious dialogue may proceed in a rather limited geographical expanse.
MEANING-MAKING

• We need to respect the diversity of meanings. Each heritage site is different, and exists in a different context. One size doesn’t fit all.
  • respect for local cultural practices and diversity of meanings regarding particular sites/practices classified as heritage.
  • There’s a difference between “positive” and “negative” commodification. Sometimes commercialization benefits the site; but it’s on a case-by-case basis (Dr. Bauer).

• So we shouldn’t seek to put them in a glass case or museumify them, but rather make tourists understand their indigenous meanings, uses and potential
  • educating people about cultural sensitivities and the particular cultural contexts associated with sites
  • Chinese policy of raising price-points to protect carrying capacity: prices out the lower classes, which isn’t right. Different classes of people need to visit these sites as well!
EDUCATE THE TOURIST

• Focus on education for tourists (including conservation methods) – zoos are good at this

• Focus on education, reducing the needs to physically explore sites; or making tourists aware of the conservation process, engage them in the acts of psychical preservation at the site and show them the cultural importance or the people who the site is significant to.

• Educate people about cultural sensitivities and the particular cultural contexts associated with sites.

• It might require a Foucauldian "disciplining" of the tourist (I have no idea how or even if such a thing should or could be brought about). What would be needed would be a framework of sentiment for approaching the culture and practices of another group in a respectful and open-minded manner with the intention of learning something, and of leaving something behind (a work, a donation, an exchange of ideas). Clear communication of expectations, I guess - though that feels very Western-rationalist as I write it.
ZOOS’ SHIFT IN EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Santa Barbara Zoo
Conservation Programs

Into the Wild
At the Santa Barbara Zoo, it’s our job to save wildlife, both here at the Zoo and out in the field. Whether it’s a majestic endangered bird, an alluring island canine, or a charming amphibian, we pledge to preserve and conserve these amazing animals.

Back from the Brink
The Santa Barbara Zoo is a partner in the heroic effort to save California condors in the wild.
ZOOS’ SHIFT IN EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES
ZOOS’ SHIFT IN EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Conservation Projects
- Supported by Sacramento Zoo
- Supported by Greater Sac AAZK
- Supported by Zoo Teens

World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) United for Conservation®

Aquatic Conservation: 2010-2014

- 130 AZA-accredited facilities contributed approximately $160 million to field conservation to support aquatic species.
- 35% of those facilities were aquariums and they contributed more than 65% of the funds.

Almost 190 species benefited from these projects, including 92 fishes, 36 aquatic invertebrates, 52 marine mammals, and 6 of the 7 extinct sea turtle species.

"Population Biology/Monitoring" was the most frequently reported keyword.

Projects that selected "Biology/Behavior/Conservation" as a keyword received almost 20% of the total funding.

Source: AZA Annual Report on Conservation
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AUGMENTED REALITY
BRUGEL: UNSEEN MASTERPIECES
RECOMMENDATION: DIALOGUE

• We need a dialogue of that addresses the goals and intents for heritage preservation.

• [Provide] ongoing spaces for debate, mechanisms for equitable conflict resolution.

• Tourism and the sustainability of heritage sites need to be in a dialogue with each other to address both intentions and goals; however, the ultimate goal should be for the community and not for the gain of the academic and/or organizational realm.

• I think you have to pick your priority. Do you want something to be environmentally sustainable or socially sustainable. Then work to mitigate the unintended negative consequences that you anticipate co-occurring with that program of action
FOCUS ON THE LOCALS

- All of the respondents in some way said that the host community should be prioritized, even if it goes against the basic tenets of preservation.
  - Sustainable tourism at heritage sites should enhance and expand the interpretation and preservation options available to locals who construct and live the heritage. Truly sustainable benefits impact the bottom as well as top of economic and political power relationships. Too many top-down (such as national-level management) strategies become a coveted source of economic resources without significant community benefit. Sustainable heritage management does not equal profitable as determined only in economic terms. Who profits matters...and who’s heritage is important to an ethical answer.

- The focus should be on empowerment rather than benefits (“indigenous tourism”)
  - Ask the local people themselves, including indigenous groups.
  - Most tourism projects that promise jobs to locals fall short of offering sufficient employment, and instead stay at underemployment or employment in service sector jobs with little chance for advancement. Keeping tourism operations in local hands can help this.

- And the international bodies should protect the local, rather than nation-state
  - Formation of concerned local + international oversight committees - preferably volunteers. We need the international to go over the heads of locals to national and international levels to intervene when corruption etc threatens to take over, e.g. Lijiang, Honghe Highlands (both in Yunnan)
QUESTION 5.1

- How effectively have indigenous and descendant communities utilized innovation (technological or otherwise) to better integrate themselves into tourism practices at their sites?
INDIGENOUS CAPACITY-BUILDING INITIATIVES

- Community-based tourism in Indonesia
- Indigenous tourism
- IPinCH Project (Intellectual Property in Cultural Heritage)
- Indigenous Mapping Program
  https://www.indigenousmaps.com/2018imw/
FINAL TAKE-AWAYS

• Innovation is part of the human experience...
• ... but be careful not to fetishize innovation for innovation’s sake
• Ask the 5 w’s: who, what, when, where, why ... and how
MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION

• **WHO** benefits from this innovation, and who does not?
• **WHAT** are the outcomes and unintended consequences.
• **WHEN** should we innovate? When shouldn’t we?
• **WHERE** are we innovating?
  • Can it sustain the changes? Where in the process do the changes take place?
• **WHY** are we innovating?
  • Is it for our gain solely, or also for other stakeholders?
• **HOW** are we innovating?
  • Do stakeholders have the knowledge, understanding and worldview to implement and/or benefit from the changes?
THINK HOLISTICALLY
... NOT SUPERFICially

“Sustainability relies on the roots of the tree not the canopy. The top-down approach may produce fast, flashy results, but dry-rotted roots will fell any tree.”