

Participatory practices in heritage management in world heritage cities: unveiling the city representatives' perceptions

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Resume:

Ilaria Rosetti is a researcher and a consultant focused on participatory practices in the management of cultural heritage.

She works as research assistant at the Eindhoven University of Technology, the Netherlands, on a project on community engagement in heritage management, taking World Heritage Cities as case study. The project aims at identifying present and future trends in practices carried out in the cities part of the OWHC network, as well as, co-designing local tailor-made solutions with a selected group of cities.

She also collaborates with the CLUE+ inter-faculty research centre at the Free University, in Amsterdam and the Centre for International Heritage Activities (CIE) at Leiden University. As an active member of ICOMOS Nederland, Ilaria has been contributing to the integration of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals into ICOMOS international strategy and related activities.

Ilaria obtained her master degree at the Maastricht University in Arts & Heritage: Policy, Management and Education, and has, since then, worked on projects for the implementation of participatory practices in different cultural sub-fields, such as sustainable tourism, policy-making for heritage, art-heritage projects development and academic research.

Paper:

SESSION 051 Urban Conservation and Urban Governance: Sharing Responsibilities, Crossing Borders?

Title: Participatory Practices in Heritage Management in World Heritage Cities: Unveiling the city representatives' perceptions.

Abstract:

Community engagement is today a goal of heritage management. Participatory practices are generally advocated for matters of authenticity and ethics, but also for the economic, environmental, cultural and social, in short, sustainable development of local communities. However, criticisms and challenges arise due to the diversity of practices, influenced by issues related to specific heritage properties, communities and management models.

International organisations and institutions are increasingly integrating topics of community engagement and participation of diverse ranges of stakeholders in their policies, charters and recommendations. The amount of academic and professional publications is growing worldwide, presenting specific case studies and local realities from different world regions.

All those studies provide valuable data, but little attempts have been made to compare them, disabling local governments and heritage professionals to learn from best practices and collaborate worldwide. This research seeks to reveal how local governments currently managing World Heritage Cities engage with local communities in heritage management. More specifically, it aims at unveiling what is the perception that representatives of these cities, both from the public and private sphere, have of participatory practices in heritage management in their city.

Participants to the OWHC 14th World Congress, on “Heritage & Communities: tools to engage with local communities”, were invited to contribute to this research by filling in a pre-congress online survey, available in the congress website, with questions on past, present and future practices in their cities. Among the twenty questions, they were asked about who participates in the management of heritage properties, which role these people have and at which stage of the management process they are involved. These data, supported by examples of local projects and policies, have then been cross-analysed to reveal global and regional trends, common issues, perceptions and best practices.

More than 200 cities participated in this survey, and 40 countries, spread in all OWHC regions. Results revealed that there is a general balance between the numbers of public and private stakeholders taking part to heritage management, with differences and trends at each stage of the process. Although experts, both public and private, together with politicians, seem to have bigger responsibilities for urban heritage identification, regulation use and conservation. This global overview opens up the discussion on the new needs of participation in heritage management, and lays the foundations for further investigation through case studies, for their comparison and, therefore, for learning and development opportunities for participatory practices in heritage management worldwide.