

ICOA1611: AVOIDING THE TRAGEDY: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN APPROPRIATION OF ELINOR OSTROM'S DESIGN PRINCIPLES IN GOVERNING A COMMONS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF BUILT HERITAGE CONSERVATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

Subtheme 01: Integrating Heritage and Sustainable Urban Development by engaging diverse Communities for Heritage Management

Session 2: Management, Documentation

Location: Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre

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Abstract: The sad reality in the Philippines is that it has, in the past few decades, earned the notoriety for not protecting its important historic structures. Several scholars and leading figures in the local art and culture scene have both postulated and lamented that this could have been no more than a function of the Filipinos' general lack of appreciation of their history. This sweeping statement, though tragic in so many ways, has been embraced by several sectors in the population and became an oft-quoted reason for the continued destruction of several historically and culturally significant buildings. But what if this is not exactly true?

This paper argues that the reason Filipinos inadvertently “allow” the demise of their manifested patrimony is that they have yet to figure out their role in the preservation of these sites. It is likely that regular citizens have to be engaged by formal state institutions and allow them to participate in the preparation of conservation policies. This argument adheres to a movement that has begun a few years back when the world witnessed an explosion of scholarship around cultural heritage being considered as a “common property” or a “commons”. The late Elinor Ostrom, following and widening the footsteps of Garrett Hardin before her, wrote several books on how different entities interact to determine how their “commons” would be governed. This research, by looking at several local case studies, endeavours to appropriate Ostrom's framework in the Philippine context and would study its viability.

Key words: *commons, governance, sustainability, engagement*

Introduction

The past few years witnessed a deluge of publications that delve into the possible intersection of sustainability concepts with those of cultural heritage conservation. A good number of these works proselytized that tried and tested processes behind some of the more successful long term environmental protection efforts could be applied to resolve specific sets of issues in historic preservation. Such was the increased traction of this novel idea that it led crucial state and non-state actors to adopt sustainability principles in the formulation of policies for the conservation and rehabilitation of cultural assets. Furthermore, different policymakers from around the globe have embraced the idea that environmental protection and safeguarding patrimony are no longer mutually-exclusive from one another.

A perfect example of this alignment of the principles behind environmental sustainability and the preservation of cultural and historic assets is embodied as one of the goals in the United Nations text officially known as *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (or more popularly known as Sustainable Development Goals 2030). Target 11.4 of the said document expresses that concerned state and non-state parties have to <<...strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage>>. ¹ Another important global figure who supports this movement the head of the Roman Catholic Church. Pope Francis, the current head of the Roman Catholic Church, also contributed substantially to the discourse by way of his 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si*. The Pope devoted an entire portion of his book tackling the necessity to not exclude cultural heritage considerations from the formulation of ecological standards. ²

The present global policy environment, invariably, still resonates the bleak projections that were made by the ecologist Garrett Hardin almost five decades ago. It would be good to ask how, from the time a probable scenario of *tragedies* taking place with the world's natural resources and even cultural assets was concocted by Hardin, have state and non-state actors responded to prevent these events from actually occurring.

To this end, this present work examines one of the most successful policy models used to mitigate potential tragedies. More specifically, this essay examines how the merger of sustainable development and heritage conservation processes could be used to ensure the continued existence of historic buildings. The research would present that by the possibly coincidental or intentional appropriation of Elinor Ostrom's design principles in governing the commons, an entire UNESCO World Heritage site in the Philippines became one of best managed heritage sites in the world.

The Tragedy of the Commons

The Tragedy of the Commons is an expression used to describe the extensive exploitation and degradation of natural resources within a specified area as a consequence of uninhibited opportunistic behaviour displayed by its inhabitants. This scenario, popularized by Garrett Hardin in his 1968 article in *Science*, swayed generations of ecology experts and policymakers to reinforce the then burgeoning discourse on sustainable development. Such was the power of Hardin's work that for years, individuals alluded to the

¹<https://unhabitat.org/un-habitat-for-the-sustainable-development-goals/11-4-world-heritage/>

²<https://cruxnow.com/church/2015/06/18/laudato-si-chapter-four-integral-ecology/>

absence of appropriate regulatory mechanisms as the cause of depletion of stocks within the so-called “commons” or “common-pool resource”.³

The concept of a commons or a common-pool resource is no longer exclusive to natural resources. In recent years, the cultural sphere also adopted the idea of the commons to refer to both tangible and intangible assets found within a specific geography. This conglomeration of heritage properties is what is now referred to as “cultural commons”. Unlike environmental assets though, capital stocks within a cultural commons could not be easily given any monetary valuation. Moreover, because of the more complex nature of their production, heritage resources are not easily substitutable.

Cultural commons are also vulnerable to their own equivalent of a tragedy. The essay *Cultural Commons and Cultural Communities* provides an apt definition, <<In the case of a cultural commons its survival depends on the production of an optimal quantity of culture to alimnt the contribution in favour of the next generation. The transmission of a cultural common to the next generation depends on the stock and flow of local culture, i.e. on the increase of the accumulated stock for culture. Without reaching an optimal rate of contributions a culture tends to become in absolute terms stationary, without any dynamic force moving forward to the next generation. While in the classic case of commons, the problem is that of over-production leading to the exhaustion of common pool resources, in the cultural common case the problem is that of under-production of cultural inputs.>>⁴

Taking-off from this definition, for the purposes of this paper, the tragedy of built heritage is not just in the destruction of the actual physical structures but also the loss of the knowledge capital (i.e. as evidenced by traditional construction knowledge) that made these buildings in the first place. The problem now is how to avoid this tragedy from even occurring. And this is where the policy recommendations of Elinor Ostrom become very useful in mitigating this potential problem.

Elinor Ostrom’s Design Principles in Governing the Commons

Of the multitude of scholarly efforts that were produced as a response to the issues that Hardin previously outlined, none achieved longevity in its appeal and applicability than the late Elinor Ostrom’s groundbreaking work titled perfectly embodied in the book *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. In the said book and her other subsequent works, Ostrom posited that the best way to govern the commons is the institution of instrumentalities that would allow for the participation of various stakeholders at key stages of policy creation and implementation.⁵ Assuming that Ostrom’s recommendations are followed, the expected outcome is that collective action from community members would be reinforced. Collective action, in turn, could also pave the way for other transformations in behaviours such as in improvement in self-regulation and monitoring amongst community members, free-riding or opportunistic tendencies would be mitigated, and negative externalities reduced.

Ostrom, at the time her book was released, challenged the two prevailing policy prescriptions regarding the most optimal methods in managing the commons. One of these policy strains called for the governance of the commons by a “Leviathan” or a coercive central state actor that would dictate behavior of community members in the context of their use of the commons.⁶ The second is diametrically opposed

³(Hardin 1968)

⁴ (Santagata, Bertacchini, Bravo, Marrell 2011)

⁵(Ostrom 1990: 29-57)

⁶(Ostrom 1990: 8-11)

to the first kind of governance as this suggested the creation of private property rights for each individual participating in the use of the commons.⁷

The alternative model that Ostrom proposed involves seven design principles for governing a commons.⁸ These seven are the following:

Define clear group boundaries.

Match rules governing use of common good to local needs and conditions.

Ensure that those affected by the rule can participate in modifying rules.

Make sure the rule-making rights of community members are respected by outside authorities.

Develop a system, carried out by community members for monitoring members' behaviour.

Provide accessible, low-cost means for dispute resolution.

Build responsibility for the common source in nested tiers from the lowest level to the entire connected system.

Vigan: A Case Study of a Commons

The seven design principles put forward by Ostrom would be aligned with the crucial indicators as to why that made Vigan the awardee for Best Management Practice amongst all the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 2012. The summary of the results could be seen in the table below.

TOPICS FOR DEMONSTRATING BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICE	ELINOR OSTROM'S DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR GOVERNING A COMMONS	PLEASE INDICATE IN THIS COLUMN WHY YOUR WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY IS A BEST IN RELATION TO THE TOPIC: ⁹
<p>Conservation:</p> <p>What innovative management practices or strategies are being applied in order to ensure the conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property (e.g. better resource management, restoration and rehabilitation, addressing various manmade or natural threats and challenges, etc?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define clear group boundaries. 	<p>1. Enactment of the following legislative measures to safeguard and preserve the historic city:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> City Ordinance No. 12, S.1997 delineating the boundaries of the historic core and buffer zones of the World Heritage Site;</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> City Ordinance No. 14, S.1997 defining the allowable uses in the core</p>

⁷(Ostrom 1990: 12-13)

⁸(McGinnis, Ostrom 1992: 1-47)

⁹This column heavily referenced the document submitted by the State Party, which is the Philippines, to the World Heritage Center as part of the requirement for judging of the Best Management Practice Award.

		<p>and buffer zones;</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/>City Ordinance No. 7, S.2006 providing the Vigan Conservation Guidelines which provides guidelines for appropriate restoration works on historic structures, construction of new structures and development of open spaces within the protected zones. The Ordinance also created a multi-sectoral Vigan Conservation Council which formulates, recommends, evaluate and approve development plans, policies and programs relating to the conservation and development of the protected zones. A Technical Working Group implements the Conservation Guidelines and evaluates restoration/ development plans for approval by the Vigan Conservation Council.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/>Traffic Code which effectively pedestrianized the main historic street of Crisologo St. and smoothen the flow of traffic within the protected zones</p> <p>2. Cultural mapping project which has identified and documented cultural heritage resources, local arts and crafts, crafts persons and practitioners of intangible cultural heritage.</p> <p>3. Establishment of a City Public Safety and Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office, as well as the adoption of fire safety measures such as preventing the use of fireworks within the protected zones.</p>
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<p>Local People:</p> <p>What exemplary practices are you using in order to effectively address the needs of local stakeholders within the management system for the property, and enable their full and active participation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match rules governing use of common good to local needs and conditions. • Ensure that those affected by the rule can participate in modifying rules. • Make sure the rule-making rights of community members are respected by outside authorities. • Develop a system, carried out by community members for monitoring members' behaviour. • Provide accessible, low-cost means for dispute resolution. • Build responsibility for the common source in nested tiers from the lowest level to the entire connected system. 	<p>Even before the site was inscribed as a World Heritage Site, public fora and multi-stakeholder workshops were organized to formulate a vision statement for the City and formulate cultural tourism strategies to uplift the economy and wellbeing of the City.</p> <p>Likewise, a series of public hearings were held to provide all stakeholders to voice their opinions regarding the enactment of each of the legislative measures to safeguard and conserve the built heritage of the City. This is quite an achievement, considering that the legislative measures have curtailed to a great extent the right of homeowners to develop of their private properties according to their wishes – a difficult task in the democratic country which human rights is respected.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/> Composed of owners of historic properties within the protected zones, the Save Vigan Ancestral Homeowners Association, Incorporated (SVAHAI) was organized to empower homeowners and enable their active participation in the conservation programme of the City Government. All matters pertaining to safeguarding and conservation of the protected zones are brought to the attention of SVAHAI members, whose President is a member of the Vigan Conservation Council. Published jointly by the City Government and UNESCO, a Heritage Homeowner's Manual has been distributed to homeowners to empower them in the proper maintenance of their historic properties. The Manual is a practical and user-friendly management tools to guide the custodians in the maintenance, repair and adaptive re-use of their historic properties, thereby promoting responsible stewardship of their heritage.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/> The Vigan Tourism Council composed of various stakeholders from the academe (universities and colleges), craft industries, infrastructure sector (transportation and communication), business sector (association of souvenir</p>
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		<p>shops, furniture makers, hotel and restaurant owners), religious and government sectors was established to help in the development of an appropriate tourism industry in the City.</p> <p>□□The Vigan Conservation Council that reviews and approves applications for construction, renovation, restoration and other works in the core and buffer zones of the heritage district is provided for by Ordinance No. 7 S 2006. It is composed of representatives from the local government, the academe, the SVAHAI, non government organizations and the Church.</p>
<p>Boundaries:</p> <p>What innovative ways of dealing with the boundaries of the property, including for management of the buffer zone do you have in place, to effectively manage the site and protect its OUV?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use graduated sanctions for rule violators. 	<p>The Vigan Heritage Management Office was established to ensure the strict implementation of the legislative ordinances listed in item 1. Personnel of the Vigan Heritage Management Office are constantly monitoring the site for the proper adherence to the protective measures by homeowners and the general public. Likewise, the site is constantly patrolled by police officers to maintain order and to provide assistance to visitors.</p>

Based on the facts presented on the table, one could see that the massive success of Vigan came from the productive interaction of formal government institutions and several layers of community-based organizations and stakeholders. Not only were they able to secure the existence of the physical structures that comprise Vigan’s historic core, they also paved the way for the transmission of traditional construction knowledge that is important in sustaining the cultural common. Moreover, the partnership produced mechanisms that curtailed potential free-riding and exploitative behaviours of individuals which greatly assisted in preserving the historic core.

It may or may not have been intentional, but the institutions that were created by the Vigan local government and stakeholders greatly resemble that of Elinor Ostrom’s prescriptions in managing a commons.

Conclusions

The case study of the Historic City of Vigan was able to show how an entire community was able to decrease the potential negative externalities of centralized-control in managing. It does appear, based on documentary evidence, that the local government of Vigan was able to institute mechanisms that enable regular stakeholders to heavily participate in the creation and implementations of policies that still help preserve the historic core.

Given Vigan's success story, and how its path greatly mirrored that of Ostrom's recommendations, it may be high time to actually look for other case studies to see if indeed, strong community participation would ensure that no tragedy would befall the built heritage of a place.

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ICOA1611: EVITER LA TRAGÉDIE: RECOMMANDATIONS POUR L'APPLICATION DES PRINCIPES D'ACCESSIBILITÉ D'ELINOR OSTROM A LA GOUVERNANCE DES BIENS COMMUNS, DANS LE CONTEXTE DE LA CONSERVATION DU PATRIMOINE MATÉRIEL AUX PHILIPPINES

Sous-thème 01: Intégrer le patrimoine et le développement urbain durable en engageant Diverses communautés pour la gestion du patrimoine

Session 2: Le management, documentation

Lieu: Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre

Date et heure: 13 Décembre, 2017, 11.15 – 11.30

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Marianne Claire Vitug est une chercheuse spécialisée en conservation du patrimoine culturel et architectural aux Philippines. Madame Vitug a travaillé dans un certain nombre de projets publics et privés ayant pour objectif le développement de politiques et de recommandations relatives à l'intervention sur des sites historiques majeurs dans son pays. Jusqu'à récemment, elle a aussi œuvré comme spécialiste des arts au Musée national des Philippines. Elle a obtenu son master en architecture avec une spécialisation en conservation du patrimoine architectural à l'Université des Philippines à Diliman.

Résumé: La triste réalité, aux Philippines, est qu'au cours des dernières décennies, le pays a acquis la réputation de ne pas protéger ses importantes structures historiques. Plusieurs experts et personnalités éminentes dans le secteur local des arts et de la culture ont avancé et déploré que ceci ne résulte que de rien d'autre que du manque général d'appréciation des Philippines envers leur histoire. Cette allégation radicale, cependant tragique à bien des égards, a été adoptée par divers groupes de la population ; elle est devenue un motif souvent cité pour poursuivre la destruction de plusieurs immeubles de valeur historique et culturelle. Mais qu'en est-il si cela n'est pas l'exacte vérité ?

Cet article soutient que si les Philippines « autorisent » malencontreusement la disparition de leur patrimoine emblématique, c'est parce qu'ils n'ont pas encore identifié leur rôle dans la préservation de ces sites. Il est plausible que les citoyens ordinaires doivent être engagés par des institutions officielles et qu'il faut leur permettre de participer à la préparation des politiques de conservation. Cet argument s'appuie sur un mouvement qui a débuté il y a quelques années, lorsque le monde a connu l'explosion de la recherche autour du patrimoine, le considérant comme une « propriété collective » ou des « biens communs ». Dernièrement, Elinor Ostrom, sur les traces de Garret Hardin et approfondissant son propos, a écrit de nombreux ouvrages démontrant comment différentes entités interagissent pour déterminer comment leurs « biens communs » doivent être gouvernés. Cette recherche, se basant sur plusieurs études de cas à l'échelle locale, tente d'adapter le schéma d'Ostrom au contexte philippin et d'étudier sa viabilité.

Mots clefs: *biens communs, gouvernance, durabilité, engagement*