Workshop Paper

Polycentric and Participatory Governance in Cultural Tourism for Community Resilience

Celia Martínez Yáñez, Cecilie Smith-Christensen, Shem Maingi, Sofia Fonseca, Rouran Zhang, Ananya Bhattacarya

ICOMOS calls for people-centred approaches to cultural heritage, considering cultural, environmental, and socio-economic concerns when local, national, and international heritage policies and practices are developed (ICOMOS, 2020). The workshop, organised on November 10, 2021, as part of the 2021 ICOMOS Scientific Symposium, considered how communities and stakeholders could strengthen resilience and adaptive capacities through inclusive governance of cultural heritage and tourism. In contrast to hierarchical and centralised governance, where stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes may be limited, polycentric or decentralised governance implies a more radical inclusion. As a central aspect of a commons-oriented approach to the management of shared resources (Ostrom, 1999; Ostrom, 2010, 2014), it sets out a complex form of governance with multiple centres of semi-autonomous decision-makers in cooperative and competitive relationships, resorting to conflict resolution mechanisms when necessary. The heritage domain can offer many examples of participatory and polycentric governance set out through customary practices and living traditions, as well as more contemporary and innovative approaches. Deliberate designs for self-organisation, such as charters, help bring diversity into shared purpose and values as peers align and groups self-constitute in efforts to deal with the challenges. To demonstrate this, the *ICOMOS International Charter for Cultural Heritage Tourism: Reinforcing Cultural Heritage Protection and Community Resilience through Responsible and Sustainable Tourism Management* adopted by ICOMOS General Assembly (GA) in 2022 was referenced throughout the workshop and in this paper.

The workshop on "Polycentric and participatory governance in cultural tourism for community resilience" specifically focused on potentials and challenges to participatory and polycentric (decentralised and/or distributed) governance in cultural tourism for community resilience, with specific attention to the *ICOMOS International Charter for Cultural Heritage Tourism 2022.* In the workshop convened and moderated by Ananya Bhattacharya, Director, www.banglanatak.com, Dr. Celia Martínez Yáñez, Tenured Professor at the Art History Department of the University of Granada, Spain, presented the 2022 ICOMOS International Cultural Heritage Tourism Charter. Dr. Shem Wambugu Maingi, Lecturer from Kenyatta University, Dr. Rouran Zhang, Associate Professor from Shenzhen University, Sofia Fonseca, Portuguese archaeologist and founder of "Teiduma, Consultancy on Heritage, Culture and Sustainability" (www.teiduma.com), and Cecilie Smith-Christensen, expert advisor to the UNESCO World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Programme and founder of World Heritage Catalysis (www.whcatalysis.org) shared examples reiterating the objectives and principles outlined in the Charter addressing opportunities and challenges to public governance, democratic participation and decision making where heritage and tourism are concerned.
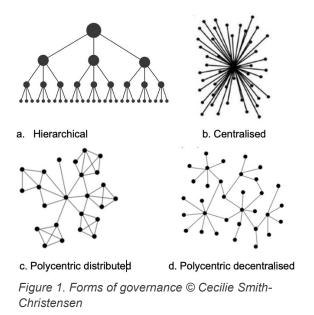
Defining heritage commons as a starting point for focus, the Preamble of the ICOMOS International Charter for Cultural Heritage Tourism considers cultural and natural heritage

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as common resources whose responsible, ethical, equitable, inclusive, and fair governance and enjoyment are shared rights and responsibilities, including and especially within the tourism domain.

a.   Hierarchical

b. Centralised

c. Polycentric distributed

d. Polycentric decentralised

Figure 1. Forms of governance © Cecilie Smith-Christensen

In contrast to hierarchical and centralised governance, where stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes may be limited, polycentric or decentralised governance implies a more radical inclusion (Figure 1). Polycentric, distributed, or decentralised governance implies a complex form of governance with multiple centres of semi-autonomous decision-makers in cooperative and competitive relationships, resorting to conflict resolution mechanisms when necessary (Ostrom, 1999, 2010, 2014). It relies on inclusive, collaborative, flexible, and learning-based approaches for adaptive destination co-management. Such a governance process may generate self-organisation and cross-sector linkages among stakeholders, which are critical in situations like those experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainties posed by climate change. The multiple actors in polycentric governance are not necessarily related to each other. They may include a diversity of actors guided by and engaging with national and state laws and international recommendations, among other mechanisms supporting public participation processes (Bollier and Helfrich, 2019; Gould, 2017; Morrison, 2017).

The presentations covered established as well as emerging practices and methodologies set out through customs and living traditions or enabled through human-centric technology and innovative networks embedded in cultural practices around the world. They specifically addressed how the heritage domain could enhance adaptive and transformative capacities through the governance of shared resources and contribute towards a development paradigm supporting and not depleting heritage commons.

2022 ICOMOS International Charter for Cultural Heritage Tourism: Reinforcing Cultural Heritage Protection and Community Resilience through Responsible and Sustainable Tourism Management

In 2017, the ICOMOS ICTC decided to review the ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter 1999 to update it to reflect the changes in tourism and heritage doctrines over the last 20 years, confront the impact of mass tourism on heritage and communities, and address their related rights issues. In 2020, upon ICOMOS declaring a Climate Emergency and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic disrupting global tourism, a reorientation of the document to strengthen the focus on cultural heritage conservation and community resilience was considered necessary. In doing so, the new Charter calls out the fundamental unsustainability of perpetual economic growth-based development and argues the importance of participatory governance for approaches applying cultural heritage in the reorientation towards a new regenerative and people-centred development paradigm.

The Charter is set out against seven principles (Table 1) supporting cultural heritage protection and stewardship through participatory governance. Principle 1 aims to place cultural heritage protection and conservation at the centre of responsible cultural tourism planning and management and defines well-managed cultural heritage tourism as a type of tourism that enables communities to participate while maintaining their social cohesion and cultural practices. It also claims a fair, equitable, and accountable allocation of tourist revenues; Principle 2 recognises the need for broad-based stakeholder involvement in the use of planning instruments and the development of management plans based on carrying capacity and limits on acceptable change approaches and indicators; and Principle 3 stresses the need to enhance public awareness and visitor experience through sensitive interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage reflecting scientific research and the diversity of community perspectives.

Principles 4, 5, and 6 focus on the participatory governance of heritage commons based on rights- and people-centred approaches to cultural heritage (ICOMOS, 2017) and the "free, prior and informed consent" of communities (UN, 2007). Accordingly, these principles aim to *increase the ability of communities to foresee and reduce risks and to make informed decisions concerning cultural heritage management and tourist use of resources to minimise the negative societal and economic impacts of disruption or intensification of use* (Principle 6). Climate change adaptation and resilience are specifically dealt with in Principle 7. This principle states that all cultural tourism stakeholders must take action to mitigate, reduce, and manage climate impacts, as this is a shared responsibility. It also stresses the importance of traditional practices and knowledge to confront this global threat. By addressing these aspects, the Charter allows for new perspectives and collaborative efforts to lead towards a new, more resilient, sustainable development path where cultural heritage is protected for its continued relevance.

The following presentations exemplify participatory and polycentric governance in practice and how the Charter may be helpful.

Table 1. ICOMOS International Charter for Cultural Heritage Tourism 2022 principles

Principle 1:	Place cultural heritage protection and conservation at the centre of responsible cultural tourism planning and management;
Principle 2:	Manage tourism at cultural heritage places through management plans informed by monitoring, carrying capacity and other planning instruments;
Principle 3:	Enhance public awareness and visitor experience through sensitive interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage;
Principle 4:	Recognize and reinforce the rights of communities, Indigenous Peoples and traditional owners by including access and engagement in participatory governance of the cultural and natural heritage commons used in tourism;
Principle 5:	Raise awareness and reinforce cooperation for cultural heritage conservation among all stakeholders involved in tourism;
Principle 6:	Increase the resilience of communities and cultural heritage through capacity development, risk assessment, strategic planning and adaptive management;
Principle 7:	Integrate climate action and sustainability measures in the management of cultural tourism and cultural heritage.

Case Study on the Cultural Landscape of Honghe Hani Rice Terraces (China)

Dr. Rouran Zhang shared how polycentric practices in the cultural heritage domain can be viewed explicitly in the governance of shared resources such as water management. On June 22, 2013, the World Heritage Committee inscribed the Cultural Landscape of Honghe Hani Rice Terraces (HRT) on the UNESCO World Heritage List. HRT is a cultural landscape with the most representative and concentrated rice terraces as the core, including the water source forests, irrigation systems, ethnic villages, and other elements on which they depend. It is a unique traditional rice culture with wide distribution, far-reaching influence, and permanent vitality under special geographical and natural conditions (UNESCO, 2013).

The HRT use of water resources is typical of the adaptability of traditional local methods called "forest-village-terrace-water system" to climate change. It represents a form of traditional polycentric/participatory governance. Compare this with two other terrace-related World Heritage sites in Asia: the Subak System in Bali, which is irrigated by a volcanic lake, and the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras, which are located in a tropical region with abundant precipitation, both of which focus on drainage rather than irrigation. At the same time, the population density of these two terraces is much smaller than that of the HRT. Therefore, the difference in water resources and population density brings about differences in habitat, and the "forest-village-terrace-water system" of the HRT has achieved the ultimate exploitation of local nature and intensive agricultural practices compared to its resource-rich counterparts. The traditional water management system and folklore of the Hani villages demonstrated by it are instructive for local heritage in the face of global climate change.

However, the government's approach to the governance of the HRT needs to consider local residents' suggestions to ensure sustainable development. A total of 86 heritage site stakeholders were interviewed for the survey from November 3-10, 2019, and the interviews were all in the form of semi-structured interviews. A total of 70% of respondents felt that one of the significant problems was the loss of the agricultural population or the disappearance of traditional culture.

Figure 2. Honghe Hani Rice Terraces © Rouran Zhang

The ICOMOS International Charter for Cultural Heritage Tourism 2022, which sets out to enhance community resilience in the face of climate change, is important for national and local governments in the governance of rural heritage sites. As guided by the new Cultural Tourism Charter in HRT, for example, governments at all levels should publish and implement heritage conservation and management plans through the promulgation of specific protection regulations and norms. Local governments should respect the positioning and use of heritage by the inhabitants of heritage sites so that the spontaneous traditions and habits of the population become conscious of practising heritage conservation. Local governments should also focus on the "living" feature of heritage sites and community participation and address the problems of labour drainage and terraced field desolation through appropriate compensation for farmers. At the same time, in collaboration with a broad spectrum of stakeholders, there is a need to prepare reasonable development plans to promote healthy ecological development through cultural tourism.

Reducing Food Waste in Tourism in Algarve (Portugal)

Sofia Fonseca explained how food security is an essential aspect of resilience. In 2021, 40% of the total food produced in the world ended up wasted (WWF-UK, no date). Causes of food waste include unsustainable production and consumption practices in developed countries; inefficient production and preservation practices, lack of infrastructure in developing countries; and disconnection with nature and the food production process in both cases. But there is more to food waste than wasted food. There are economic, social, and environmental aspects to be considered. The ICOMOS International Charter for Cultural Heritage Tourism 2022, in Principle 7, indicates that all cultural tourism stakeholders must take action to mitigate, reduce, and manage climate impacts. Culturally sustainable and responsible tourism can be a force for good in transforming customers' behaviour to more nutritious and safe diets with a lower environmental footprint by adopting and implementing the principles of the Mediterranean Diet.

Figure 3. Separating the waste to be identified and weighed, in Tertúlia Algarvia © Sofia Fonseca

After the ICTC workshop, and through a polycentric approach, a project has been proposed by the civil society regarding the tourism food industry in the Algarve: "NO ALgarbage- zero waste in tourism". The partners are *Teiduma, Consultancy on Heritage, Culture and Sustainability*; *Tertúlia Algarvia*, in Faro, a restaurant and cultural association dedicated to the Algarve and the Mediterranean diet and culture; *Faro Story Spot- a cidade e a Ria*, a visitation centre dedicated to the city of Faro; *Cafézique* a restaurant with a creative cuisine, in Loulé; and *Mercearia Bio*, an organic supermarket and restaurant in Lagos. The proposal was presented to the ACCIONAD-ODS call for micro-projects by local actors in the implementation of sustainable socio-environmental practices that contribute to the achievement of SDG goals 11, 12, and 13. "NO ALgarbage- zero waste in tourism" was selected and is being implemented with the financial support of ACCIONAD-ODS, which is co-financed by EP-Interreg V Espanha-Portugal (POCTEP). By bringing

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together these different actors and through different stages that include 1) Identifying and measuring food waste; 2) Strategies to prevent waste; 3) Food waste management; 4) Measuring the results; and 5) Follow-up and monitoring, we are looking forward to establishing guidelines to be adopted by the tourism industry in the Algarve to reduce food waste and our ecological footprint while saving money and natural resources. The project results were presented in a workshop in Faro in June 2022 (www.noalgarbage.com).

Case Study of Tourism, Climate Change, Community Resilience, and Models of Governance in Kenya: Case of Lake Turkana National Parks in Kenya

Dr. Shem Wambugu Maingi described how heritage tourism destinations in Kenya are currently facing numerous challenges in adapting their governance approaches to withstand crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, social instabilities, economic crises and terrorism threats. The climate crisis presents unique challenges such as the trade-off between infrastructure development, heritage conservation, securing lives, human rights, and livelihood preservation. In order to tackle the threats of climate change and build local resilience systems to these threats, there is a need to establish a suitable and equitable balance between the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of heritage tourism development. The Lake Turkana National Parks are one of the most significant Archaeological and Cultural heritage sites in Kenya and are listed among the sites in grave danger. The region, which was inscribed as a heritage site in 1997, has one of the longest living histories on earth. Fossil deposits at Koobi Fora (Sibiloi National Park) have contributed to the understanding of human ancestry, and the Lake is known to be the Cradle of Mankind. Studies show that the wetland ecosystems, traditional livelihoods and living heritage of the cradle of mankind are threatened by the infrastructure, climate change, irrigation, droughts, and dam developments along the Omo River, which is the main tributary to Lake Turkana (Avery and Tebbs, 2018; Junqueira *et al.,* 2021). Climate change is posing risks to the rights to life, health, food, and water of the people of Turkana. Despite the efforts by the Kenya Government to implement the Management Plan for 2018-2028,

Figure 4. Lake Turkana South Island © Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

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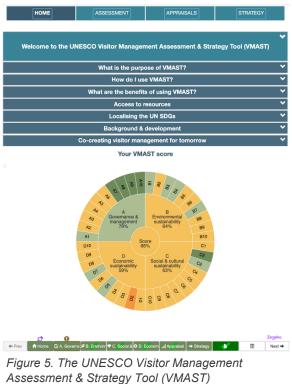&
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there was a continued lack of coordinated response from state parties in Kenya and Ethiopia on the current status of the Gilgel Gibe III dam (UNESCO, 2019). The 2016 Policy on Devolved System of Governance in Kenya led to the decentralisation of the governance functions, which has expanded the capacity of the county to mainstream climate adaptation strategies for vulnerable populations within their development agenda. Polycentric governance through stakeholder collaboration has enabled the mapping, development, preservation, and conservation of Turkana's rich natural, cultural, and colonial heritage. It has also provided greater opportunities for engaging the local communities and local stakeholders, such as the Friends of Lake Turkana and Turkana Hotels and Restaurants Association, in fostering social, economic, and environmental justice in the Lake Turkana basin.

Enhancing World Heritage Stewardship and Community Resilience through Tourism and Visitor Management

In the face of climate change, communities hosting World Heritage Sites and attracting visitors need to be prepared for disruptions that require the community to adapt to new circumstances quickly. The prospect of more frequent fluctuations in visitor numbers, possibly even a collapse in the tourism sector, calls for proactive and adaptive management approaches that seek to build community resilience through the stewardship of shared resources. Cecilie Smith-Christensen shared the UNESCO World Heritage Visitor Management Assessment & Strategy Tool (VMAST) that is available through the UNESCO World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Programme and Toolkit (https://whc.unesco.org/en/vmast/?p=123456). VMAST is a self-assessment and strategy development tool developed to assist World Heritage site management authorities in their efforts to manage tourism for the protection of heritage values while localising the UNSDGs. Set across four overarching goals (governance; environmental-, socio-cultural- and environmental sustainability), including 40 strategic objectives and more than 200 target indicators, VMAST is helpful in identifying and engaging community stakeholders in issues of shared concern. As a strategy development tool, VMAST can support the development of new strategies and/or the update of existing plans supporting participatory governance through adaptive and proactive co-management.

Figure 5. The UNESCO Visitor Management Assessment & Strategy Tool (VMAST)
© *www.vmast.net*

However, collaborative and adaptive visitor management may not be enough to strengthen community resilience and adaptability to severe disruptions. This is why World Heritage Catalysis (https://www.whcatalysis.org), set up as 'an emerging commons-oriented community of practice', in addition to supporting the use of VMAST, also explores how other tools and technologies including web-3

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technology[1] applied through the WHOA (World heritage Autonomous Organisation) and mutual credit systems[2] applied through WHETS (World Heritage Exchange Trading System) could further support and incentivize inclusive stakeholder collaboration in the identification and realisation of alternative, regenerative development pathways.

Conclusion

The examples have demonstrated that stewardship through shared ownership and participatory governance of cultural and natural heritage commons enables the reorientation of practice through new perspectives and collaborative efforts. Participatory governance extends beyond facilitating the involvement of local stakeholders. Tourism planning, development, and management pertaining to natural and cultural heritage commons should involve comprehensive participation, gender equality, and the fundamental recognition of indigenous and common law and rights ingrained in communities and living cultures. The ICOMOS International Charter for Cultural Heritage Tourism 2022, which addresses cultural and natural heritage as commons and the unsustainability of the paradigm of perpetual economic growth, helps uncover blind spots in current practices with principles that aim to bring diversity into a shared purpose, which may lead to new and more resilient pathways for sustainable development.

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1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web3
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