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Intangible Cultural Heritage – From the Development of a Concept to the Protection of Cultural Diversity

Series of Lectures of the Institute Heritage Studies (IHS) -
Guest lecture at the Beijing Institute of Technology (BIT)
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Global communication and information systems have changed the industrial development with their streams of capital and goods

Communication and information around the globe affected both directly and indirectly the cultures of the world

***Globalization is a result of the
'Third Industrial Revolution'***

The global changes have changed the approaches towards intangible heritage and its meaning for cultural identities



Crac des Chevaliers and Qal'at Salah El-Din, Syrian Arab Republic

Due to globalization, the safeguarding of intangible heritage has become an urgent need

culture gives mankind
the ability to reflect upon
itself

culture makes us
specifically human,
rational beings

through culture we discern
values and make choices

1982

The Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies

“in its widest sense, culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs”



Tassili n'Ajjer,
Algeria

man expresses
himself [through culture],
becomes aware of himself,
recognizes his incompleteness,
questions his own achievements,
seeks untiringly for new
meanings and creates works
through which he transcends
his limitations



addition of intellectual goods

Jordan:

The Cultural Space of the Bedu
in Petra and Wadi Rum

The concept of heritage has been extended
since the beginning of the 1980s; now it
includes intangible expressions

*“If heritage is a mentality, a way of knowing
and seeing, then all heritage becomes, in a
sense ‘intangible’”*
(Smith 2009, S. 54)

emotionally characterised customs

Central African Republic:

The Polyphonic Singing of the Aka
Pygmies of Central Africa



spiritual customs

Zambia:

The Makishi Masquerade



holy rites

Mexico:
The Indigenous Festivity
dedicated to the Dead

local artcrafts

Madagascar:
The Woodcrafting
Knowledge of the Zafimaniry



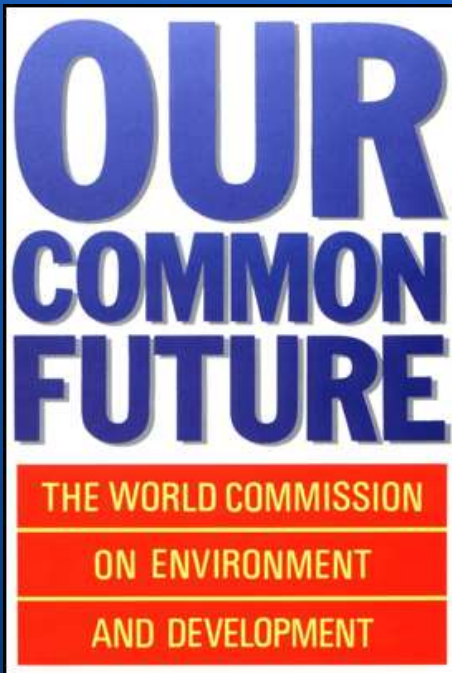
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(Smith 2009, S. 54)

popular festivities and ceremonies

Morocco:
The Cultural Space of Jemaa el-Fna Square





Brundtland Report 1987

Source: <http://www.greenconduct.com/>

"Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Source: From World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) (1987): Our Common Future. Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, S. 44.

1989

*The Recommendation on the Safeguarding of
Traditional Culture and Folklore*

Definition of Folklore:

For purposes of this Recommendation:
Folklore (or traditional and popular culture) is the totality
of tradition-based creations of a cultural community,
expressed by a group or individuals and recognized as
reflecting the expectations of a community in so far as
they reflect its cultural and social identity; its standards
and values are transmitted orally, by imitation or by
other means. Its forms are, among others, language,
literature, music, dance, games, mythology, rituals,
customs, handicrafts, architecture and other arts.



Russian Federation:
The Olonkho, Yakut Heroic Epos

Source: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13141&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

The Memory of the World Programme (1992)



Fritz Lang:
Metropolis



The Gutenberg Bible

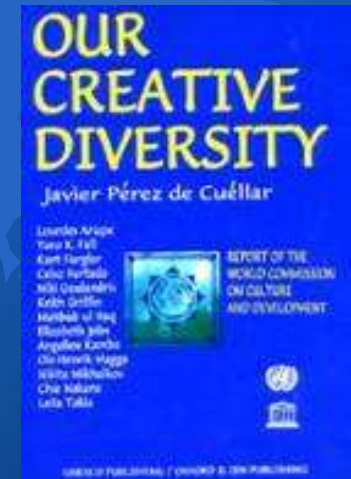


Ludwig van
Beethoven:
Symphony No 9

Our Creative Diversity (1995)

Is based on a three year study of the World Commission on Culture and Development which was chaired by UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar with the main aim: to stimulate debate and propose new perspectives on the interaction of culture and development.

1. a new global ethics
2. a commitment to pluralism
3. creativity and empowerment
4. challenges of a media-rich world
5. gender and culture
6. children and young people
7. culture heritage for development
8. culture and the environment
9. rethinking cultural policies
10. research needs



Les Éditions UNESCO 1997

1996 Endangered Languages Programme

- “Languages are humankind’s principle tools for interacting and for expressing ideas, emotions, knowledge, memories and values.” (UNESCO, 2003)
- mobilizes international cooperation to focus attention on this grave situation
- promotes innovative solutions from communities, experts and authorities



Interactive Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger (© UNESCO)

2001 Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger

- intended to raise awareness about language endangerment and the need to safeguard the world's linguistic diversity among policy-makers, speaker communities and the general public
- tool to monitor the status of endangered languages and the trends in linguistic diversity at the global level



Interactive Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger (© UNESCO)

Cultural Landscapes

Definition:

“The term ‘cultural landscape’ embraces a diversity of manifestations of the interaction between humankind and its natural environment. Cultural landscapes often reflect specific techniques of sustainable land-use, considering the characteristics and limits of the natural environment they are established in, and a specific spiritual relation to nature.”



Cultural landscape of the
Batad rice terraces

Categories:

- clearly defined landscape designed and created intentionally by man
- organically evolved landscape
- associative cultural landscape

Source: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/culturallandscape/>



Canada: World Cultural Heritage SGang Gwaay (1981). The village of Ninstints commemorates the living culture of the Haida people and their relationship to the land and sea, and offers a visual key to their oral traditions.

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/157>

Cultural Landscapes include Intangible Heritage

Sweden: World Mixed Heritage Laponian Area (1996). The Arctic circle region of northern Sweden is home of the Saami, or Lapp people.

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/774>



2003

Adoption

**Convention for the Safeguarding of
the Intangible Cultural Heritage**

The intangible cultural heritage
– or living heritage – is the
mainspring of our cultural diversity
and its maintenance a guarantee for
continuing creativity

2006

Entry into force
on April 20;
after ratification
by 30 states

2011

3 types of nominations
35 new elements inscribed to the
lists, nominated by 24 member states
267 elements up to now
Convention ratified by 166 states

2019

Convention ratified by 179 states
549 elements listed

- Urgent Safeguard List: 64
- Representative List: 463
- Register of Best Safeguarding: 22



Carnival of Barranquilla,
Colombia

1. Oral traditions and expressions - Jordan: The Cultural Space of the Bedu in Petra and Wadi Rum

The Bedu have preserved wide-ranging knowledge and skills related to the area around Petra and Wadi Rum, including traditional medicine, camel husbandry, tent-making craftsmanship, tracking and climbing as well as rituals of coffee-making and oral traditions reflecting their mythology.



2. Performing arts - Central African Republic: The Polyphonic Singing of the Aka Pygmies of Central Africa

The polyphonic songs of the Aka Pygmies are an integral part of their hunting and life-cycle rituals, a tool of communication and reaffirmation of community values. With socio-economic changes, deforestation and rural exodus, the Aka traditions are inclined to gradually disappear.



3. Social practices, rituals and festive events - Zambia: The Makishi Masquerade

As part of initiation, boys leave their communities to live in a bush camp where they are taught practical skills as well as knowledge about nature, religion and social values. For their reintegration into the community, they perform the Makishi masquerade involving beautifully painted masks that represent different spiritual characters.



4. Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe - Mexico: The Indigenous Festivity Dedicated to the Dead

Coinciding with the maize harvest, this annual festivity commemorates the transitory return to Earth of deceased relatives or loved ones. People gather at cemeteries and in churches throughout Mexico to leave flower petals, candles and offerings to celebrate and facilitate the return of the souls.



5. Traditional craftsmanship - Madagascar: The Woodcrafting Knowledge of the Zafimaniry

The Zafimaniry community of about 25,000 people practices a unique wood crafting culture. Most wooden surfaces in their villages – from utensils to houses – are delicately crafted, displaying elaborate ornamentation. These motifs carry rich symbolic significance related to Zafimaniry cosmovision and values.



The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

- The Convention was adopted within an extremely short period of time
- The concept of intangible cultural heritage derives from the translation of a Japanese concept into English
- It has been mainly appreciated by African countries with precious intangible witnesses of their cultures, who appreciate the Intangible Heritage Convention



Nôgaku theatre, Japan

Source: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>

The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

“Referring to existing international human rights instruments, in particular to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights of 1948, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,

Considering the importance of the intangible cultural heritage as a mainspring of cultural diversity and a guarantee of sustainable development, as underscored in the UNESCO Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore of 1989, in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of 2001, and in the Istanbul Declaration of 2002 adopted by the Third Round Table of Ministers of Culture, [...]”

Source: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>



Nôgaku theatre, Japan



Laponian Area, Sweden





Korea's "Jongmyo jerye" and "jerye-ak" have been deemed by UNESCO to be

Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity

The true contribution of a culture consists, not in the list of inventions which it has personally produced, but in its difference from others. The sense of gratitude and respect which each single member of a given culture can and should feel towards all others can only be based on the conviction that the other cultures differ from his own in countless ways.
(Claude Lévi-Strauss 1952)



Claude Lévi-Strauss

Source: Extract from "Race and Culture", published in Unesco's International Social Science Journal, Vol.XXIII, No. 4, 1971

2001 Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity

“Cultural diversity: the common heritage of humanity

Culture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind. As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations.” (*Article 1*).



Source: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000127160>

A faint, light blue world map is centered in the background of the slide, showing the outlines of the continents.

Thank you for your attention!

Pictures

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