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Exploring the Frontiers of Heritage: Economics, Social Ecology, and Collective Memory

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Exploring the Frontiers of Heritage: Economics, Social Ecology, and Collective Memory

Neil Silberman
Ename Center for Public Archaeology and Heritage Presentation
Belgium
Crossing Some Important Frontiers

Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage

Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
Paris, 17 October 2003
Click on the following links to download Official texts:
- English
- French
- Spanish
- Russian
- Arabic
- Chinese

The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization hereinafter referred to as UNESCO, meeting in Paris, from 29 September to 17 October 2003, at its 32nd session,

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,
Reconceptualizing the Frontiers of Heritage

TANGIBLE

INTANGIBLE
From Monuments to Cultures
From Objects to Processes
From Icons to Ideas
Shared Institutional Processes

- Adopting universal criteria for significance and value
- Categorizing and studying the physical types
- Creating inventories of specific vessels of significance and value
- Establishing guidelines and codes of protection
- Conserving the extant physical manifestations
- Communicating their value and significance through “official” heritage.
Dynamic, Not Static

Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage:
Definition 1

...intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity...
How Do We Safeguard Change?
What Exactly are We Safeguarding and How?
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage:
Definition 3

“Safeguarding” means measures aimed at ensuring the **viability** of the intangible cultural heritage... as well as the **revitalization** of the various aspects of such heritage.
What Factors Are Endangering the Viability and Vitality of ICH?

- **Economics**: Globalised Mass Production and Consumption

- **Social Ecology**: Demographic Mobility and Cultural Transformations

- **Collective Memory**: The Use of the Past as Leisure Entertainment or Escape
“Traditional” Past and “Globalised” Present are not clear oppositions, but dynamic, competing forces. Creative exploration of the boundaries between them is the basis of sustainable Cultural Diversity…
Reconceptualizing the Frontiers of Heritage

TANGIBLE

INTANGIBLE

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Reconceptualizing the Frontiers of Heritage
ECONOMICS
SOCIAL ECOLOGY
COLLECTIVE MEMORY
HERITAGE
Economics
Economics

Profit-Driven Mass (Re)Production and Marketing

Aesthetic/Social Motivations for Conservation of Tradition
Social Ecology

Contemporary Social/Economic Transformations

Traditional Lifeways
Collective Memory

(C)Mairie de Douai

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Collective Memory

Created, Adopted and/or Marketed Attractions

Traditional Sources of Cultural Identity

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Reconceptualize **Multiple** Frontiers of Heritage with New Multidisciplinary Processes, Not Only Classifications

- Study of the Dynamics of Cultural Tradition
- Identification of Tangible and Intangible Vessels
- Integration of Conserved Traditions/Products with Evolving Social Landscape
- Balance Past and Evolving Identities
The Frontiers of Heritage Are Everywhere