***Perceptions of Sustainability in Heritage Studies*,**
Heritage Studies Volume 4,
(ed.) Marie-Theres Albert,
(Berlin, Germany: Walter De Gruyter, 2015)

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Sustainability has become a popular term that unfortunately has been diluted by being used with little intellectual foundation in a wide variety of professional and vernacular settings. The authors of this volume, however, have found the concept's centre and kept within that frame. This conceptual focus is admirable because the concept of sustainability is well understood in national and international government policy and regulation. The contributors to this book use the concept as it has been defined in UNESCO policies, but they elaborate on it based on their own experiences. For most modern nations, UNESCO policies ultimately frame the evaluation and implementation of heritage sustainability efforts.

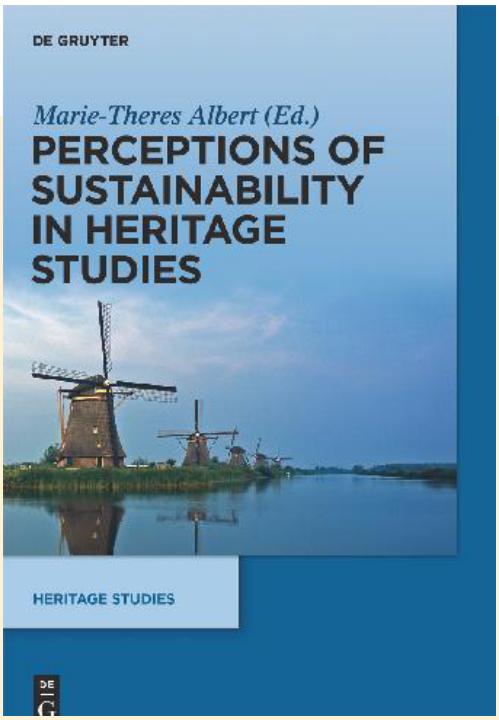
Perceptions of Sustainability is the fourth volume in the 'Heritage Studies Series' which includes: Volume One, *Understanding Heritage- Perspectives in Heritage Studies* (2013); Volume Two, a German language translation of Volume One (2015); and Volume Three, *40 Years World Heritage Convention – Popularizing the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage* (2015). Taken together, these four volumes provide accurate and useful perspectives on contemporary issues in heritage identification, protection, and management.

The *Perceptions of Sustainability* volume contains 18 chapters that are organised into four sections (1)

'Introductory Reflections', which defines and elaborates on the boundaries of sustainability as a concept and convention; (2) 'History and Documents', which provides diachronic perspectives including discussions of landscapes and intangible heritage; (3) 'Paradigms', which includes urban issues and issues relating to heritage among traditional peoples who are especially connected with natural areas; and (4) 'Theory, Methods, and Practice', which is further subdivided into (a) 'Disciplines and Epistemological Perspectives', which considers cultural landscapes as these have emerged in the USA National Park Service, and the heritage value of public spaces and (b) 'Sustainability in Heritage Management Strategies', which discusses the recent emergence of a post-colonial cultural pluralism that celebrates those heritage voices marginalised during the colonial eras, and examines the issue of sustainable tourism.

The book has a simple table of contents, an annex that contains related websites, mostly produced by UNESCO and other UN divisions, some elaborate 'Notes on Contributors', brief 'Notes on Peers' who served as the reviewers of the volume, and a limited index. There is no index of figures even though they are used in many chapters. The discussion of contributors proves to be useful and even interesting, and should be read first as both an overview of the subject and for critical insights into the chapter authors, who are culturally and professionally diverse. A close reading of the authors' background experiences provides a thumbnail history of contemporary heritage management throughout much of the world. Where they have travelled, and what they have accomplished, is truly impressive; one author published ten books and over one hundred articles on the subject. This collection of high quality scholars speaks directly to the intellectual value of the book.

The volume's title *Perceptions of Sustainability* refers to those perceptions held by the chapter authors, and does not imply a survey of worldwide perceptions as these occur in policy, practice, and society. So the volume has 18 essays that feature what these scholars perceived to be critical heritage guidelines and issues. Most essays place the analysis within the context of UNESCO conventions and resolutions. This is not surprising given the UNESCO sponsorship of the Heritage Series Studies, and the fact that the volume editor is the holder of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chair in Heritage Studies. As such, the volume represents authoritative perceptions about heritage issues.



Many of the chapters address the potential relationship between preservation and development, with the implication that there can be kinds of development that do result in sustainable heritage. For much of the 20th century the literature posited that preservation and development were irreconcilable. Early 21st century realities have resulted in seeking common ground solutions that utilise ecological or heritage tourism. Clearly, however, some cases show that the funds deriving from mass tourism often do not outweigh the physical damage that tourism does to heritage sites.

Elsewhere, authors argue for a new heritage paradigm that better represents small scale and vernacular heritage issues, especially those that were not celebrated under the colonial system. These arguments tend to be grounded in the concept of cultural pluralism, especially as it has been defined by the UNESCO 2001 *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*. Despite this official statement regarding new heritage expectations, hundreds of years of colonial heritage as manifested in literature and museum displays means it is a struggle for post-colonial heritage issues to emerge at all, much less for them to receive affirmative actions to offset past imbalances. New heritage voices often insist on being uniquely expressed, like fictional characters in graphic novels (Lynch and Clark, 2012).

The concern for incorporating, even centring, vernacular heritage issues is especially important because the establishment of many of the early World Heritage Sites was based on recognised international values and elite support, but they occurred at the expense of local values and social goals. For example, see Lorraine Nicholas's study of the social and environmental impacts on local St. Lucian people deriving from the establishment of the Piton Management Area, World Heritage Site (Nicholas et al 2009; Nicholas and Thapa 2010) [http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1161]. World heritage support removed much of the nearby ocean, which was then protected by a large Marine Protected Area called the Soufriere Marine Management Reserve [http://www.smma.org.lc]. Within a few decades the people of the small village of Soufriere, St. Lucia, lost control of most of the lands and ocean resources they had traditionally held, and which they managed under what is known as 'usufruct' or 'generation lands'. Now these land and sea resources are managed by international conservation organisations.

The book ends with a potential solution to concerns about how to advance multiculturalism when making decisions about heritage. This chapter maintains that 'Heritage Impact Assessments' (HIA) should be conducted early in the decision making process whenever a major heritage decision is proposed. What the HIA analytical frame can facilitate is the identification and potential incorporation of vernacular issues into heritage decisions. Ironically, much of Europe (and societies elsewhere) also utilises 'Sustainable Impact Assessment' (SIA) when a decision about a major development is proposed (Bond, Morrison-Saunders, and Howitt, 2013). So if HIA and SIA are combined in heritage decisions (at any scale) these officially recognised protocols can serve to ensure that vernacular issues will be considered as a part of decisions about the sustainability of heritage.

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