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Doctoral School "International Relations and European Studies"

The role of cultural heritage in the process of sustainable development. Recommendations for a public policy on cultural heritage in Romania

-abstract-

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Keywords: cultural heritage, heritage management, sustainable development, strategies, public policies.

The PhD thesis entitled "The role of cultural heritage in the process of sustainable development. Recommendations for a public policy on cultural heritage in Romania" is a research approach that aims to synthesize those key information that build and affect cultural heritage management, without being all-encompassing. It does not aim to analyse in depth every aspect of cultural heritage, as such an approach can extend over periods of decades. The novelty we bring is represented by chapter four, which aims to create the basis for a public policy proposal in the field of cultural heritage, offering, as a result of the research carried out and presented up to this point, recommendations for the adoption of international and European best practice models and their inclusion in the management of cultural heritage in Romania. The idea of researching cultural heritage management in Romania arose from the researcher's desire to understand and analyse the Romanian socio-cultural scene and its prerogatives in terms of sustainable development in greater depth. The academic context and the researcher's professional experience in the field of international relations and European studies, with application in the sphere of European project management, constitute the foundation for the formulation of the first research question: What are the measures that can be taken in order to optimize the management of cultural heritage in Romania, in order to enhance its contribution to the sustainable development process of the country, in accordance with its size and value for the community?

We therefore start from the assumption that cultural heritage is an important process for sustainable development in Romania and we aim to identify those measures that can be taken to highlight the value of heritage and to contribute to the process of its protection and promotion. In order to test and validate this hypothesis, it is necessary to address new research questions, which are the pillars of the research methodology and are used as tools to ground, theoretically and practically, the answer to the main research question, provided in the final chapter of the paper.

- A. What is cultural heritage and how is it understood in society?
- B. What is the role of cultural heritage in the process of sustainable development?

C. What are the models of good practice in cultural heritage management and to what extent can they be replicated/adapted by a country with Romania's socio-cultural specificities?

In the following chapters of the paper, we intend to provide one or more analytical approaches aimed at providing adequate answers to the research questions mentioned.

The research methodology has been designed in three dimensions, both in terms of theoretical foundations and empirical analysis. The theoretical grounding was carried out through the classical bibliographic research method, while the empirical analysis is based on qualitative research methodology of data collection, using tools such as unstructured interview, semi-structured interview, and participatory observation.

In order to understand the relevance of cultural heritage and the role it plays both in general at societal level and in particular when it comes to the process of sustainable development, through the literature review method, three types of theorisations proved to be relevant: functionalism, constructivism and critical theories. The three theorisations have different spheres of applicability and analyse different aspects of culture and cultural heritage.

Functionalism provides a macro perspective on the role that cultural heritage plays in shaping social systems and creating order at the social level. For the purpose of this paper, the functionalist approach to cultural heritage explains how it contributes to shaping collective identity, developing solidarity among members of a community and maintaining cultural continuity in the transition from traditional to modern societies.

Constructivism, through theories such as interpretive anthropology, symbolic interactionism, and cultural memory theory, offers a micro perspective on the relationship between cultural heritage and community. These theories present cultural heritage as a social construct, the result of people's interactions and interpretations with their environment. Through the constructivist lens, cultural heritage can be valued to the extent that members of the community decide unilaterally or individually to attribute a certain meaning to it. Constructivist theories offer a complex perspective on the relationship between cultural heritage, cultural identity and the social development of a community or country. These theories explain, through a multidisciplinary analysis, how the cultural identity of an individual and the group(s) to which they belong is formed and shaped by the social context in which they live. Moreover, theories such as symbolic interactionism explore how cultural identity, once formed, influences and contributes to processes of social development.

While functionalism and constructivism rather analyse and explain the relevance of cultural heritage in modern society from a social, anthropological, political and psychological point of view, critical perspectives on cultural heritage create the theoretical foundations that explain the use of cultural heritage as a political and economic instrument of domination and control. By referring to cultural heritage as a process rather than an object in itself, critical theories such as authoritative heritage discourse and critical heritage studies start from the 'conflict perspective' to explain and critique sociological phenomena such as: the economic use of cultural heritage, the use of culture as an instrument of political domination of a society and the focus on the 'aesthetics' of cultural heritage.

The three perspectives analysed provide a comprehensive theoretical framework that places cultural heritage at the heart of the social, economic and political processes that take place in a society, in the relationship between individuals, between individuals and the state and between two or more states.

The three-dimensionality mentioned above is also reflected in the empirical analysis of cultural heritage. Using qualitative data collection methods, we based the empirical analysis on the analysis of national and European documents in the field of cultural heritage, as well as semi-structured interviews, unstructured interviews and participatory observation with a small number of heritage managers and researchers. The case study, for it is a case study, follows cultural heritage managers and the management processes they undertake to protect and promote heritage in the context of sustainable development. The three perspectives are:

a) local perspective: that of managers of cultural institutions in Cluj-Napoca; b) national perspective: that of representatives of the Romanian Ministry of Culture; c) European perspective: that of heritage researchers from several European countries considered to be models of good practice for Romania.

Thesis structure

The paper is structured in three chapters that reflect the complexity of the field, each with a defined purpose in the process of research and analysis of cultural heritage.

In the first chapter, "Theoretical perspectives on cultural heritage", we aim to create the theoretical conceptual framework of the paper, through an explanation of the term "cultural heritage" and its placement in the contemporary socio-cultural environment. Since we consider cultural heritage as a complex process that can only be analysed in relation to other socio-economic and political processes with which it comes into contact and which it

influences, we consider the analysis of the ethics of heritage to be relevant at this point in the paper. The theories discussed in the chapter provide a broad but comprehensive perspective on cultural heritage. Through functionalism, we see the relevance of cultural heritage as an identity factor in the formation of societies. Constructivist approaches analyse cultural heritage in relation to its creators and the environments it influences, while critical theories are used to place cultural heritage in a broader political and economic context and to show its contribution to power dynamics in international relations.

The next chapter, "The role of cultural heritage in the process of sustainable development", is structured in two parts. The first part looks at social, economic, and political perspectives on the relationship between cultural heritage and the different processes taking place in society: the formation and progress of collective identity, the development of innovative technologies and sustainable tourism. A priority focus is on economic aspects and how innovative technologies can be the key to protecting and promoting cultural heritage in the 21st century. The second part of the chapter describes theoretical and practical models of cultural heritage management, following the theoretical approaches taken by the Council of Europe, UNESCO and ANZECC on the one hand, and the practical approaches taken by countries such as Greece, Latvia and Poland on the other.

The final chapter of the paper is a case study. Semi-structured interviews, unstructured interviews and participatory observation led to a list of recommendations for a public policy proposal in the field of cultural heritage protection and promotion in the context of sustainable development. The analysis, carried out with the involvement of heritage managers and researchers at local, national, and European level, provides a new vision of the process of cultural heritage management and protection, by highlighting the elements we consider essential in this process: human resources, academia, and civil society. The recommendations are based on the main problem identified, namely the lack of understanding at institutional level of the connection between cultural heritage and sustainable development and the lack of awareness of its importance, but above all the institutional failure to respond to societal needs for development, considering the issues related to the protection of cultural heritage.

The objectives of the list of recommendations are:

- Improve the legislative framework governing cultural heritage.
- Digitise and decentralise administrative procedures for the management, protection, conservation, restoration, and promotion of cultural heritage.

- Financial and administrative efficiency of cultural institutions.
- Increase the level of involvement of society and the academic community in the cultural heritage management process.

In this respect, the list of recommendations includes:

- 1. A top-down approach to the legislative framework for the protection and conservation of cultural heritage.
- 2. Introduction of the concepts of "planned conservation" and "risk mapping" for cultural heritage into the legislative framework.
- 3. Digitise the cultural heritage management system.
- 4. Reduce the number of monuments on the list of Historic Monuments by downgrading them.
- 5. Privatise Museum management, similar to the Dutch model.
- 6. Reducing the number of staff employed in state-funded cultural institutions.
- Decentralisation of the procedure for obtaining permits for the restoration, renovation, and repair of heritage objects by authorising the decentralised services of the Ministry of Culture.
- 8. Formalising a public-private partnership to access structural funds for cultural heritage.
- 9. Create cultural project management divisions in the territories, at the level of county councils or county directorates for culture.
- 10. The INP, INS or INCFC should carry out annual analyses linking cultural heritage to the sustainable development process.
- 11. Collaboration between the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education with a view to initiating a dialogue with higher education institutions aimed at developing university training programmes in the field of cultural heritage management.
- 12. Re-examine the role of the Ministry of Culture as a factor in raising public awareness of the protection and promotion of cultural heritage.

Overall, this case study provides a complex perspective on the interaction between cultural heritage and the sustainable development process, highlighting the importance of proper management of the former in order to facilitate the successful implementation of the latter. In the first part of the research, we analysed the perceptions and experiences of cultural heritage managers in the municipality of Cluj-Napoca. This revealed their varied understanding of the

concept of cultural heritage management at regional level, as well as the challenges they face in their daily activities. The second part of the case study followed discussions with representatives of the Romanian Ministry of Culture and European experts in the field of culture and cultural heritage. This section brought to light elements that could be improved in the process of administrative and political management of cultural heritage, as well as examples of good practice from other European countries. Synthesising the theoretical and empirical knowledge acquired up to this point, the last part of the research is the list of recommendations for the development of a public policy proposal in the field of cultural heritage, which aims to contribute to the development of an integrated and sustainable approach to heritage that serves the interests of communities and supports the economic and political objectives of sustainable development.

The process of managing and protecting cultural heritage is driven by individuals, citizens who identify to a greater or lesser extent with that heritage and who, whether consciously or unconsciously, are shaped by their interaction with it. This relationship of mutual influence that people have with their cultural heritage, the same people also have with their environment. The causal chain thus described is illustrated in the relationship between cultural heritage and the process of sustainable development.

At the heart of the relationship between cultural heritage, individuals/societies and the environment are sustainable, efficient development and prosperity.

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