

HERITAGE AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A PROCESS-AND-OUTCOMES TYPOLOGY

Robyn Eversole

Senior Research Fellow, Institute for Regional Development, University of Tasmania.

ABSTRACT: ANZRSAT's 2006 conference emphasised the important role played by natural, built and cultural heritage in 'driving' regional development. But how can heritage be successfully tapped as a regional development resource, and what kinds of outcomes may result? This paper proposes a typology of approaches, drawing on examples from around the world. The typology is organised according to the level of 'cultural integration' of a given heritage initiative. It focuses on three key areas: Identification Process (how heritage resources are identified), Implementation Process (what kinds of approaches are taken to 'develop' or make use of these resources), and Outcomes (the kinds of outcomes that result). The typology is intended to assist regional development practitioners and academics to recognise and evaluate the broad range of ways that 'heritage' can be used in regional development and the varied outcomes that can be generated. Specifically, the paper considers how to move from opportunistic to sustainable processes, and from single-dimensional to multidimensional outcomes.

1. INTRODUCTION

Places with *heritage* are places with stories. These stories have something to say about the past and about people's identity – whether locally, regionally, or at a wider scale. It is therefore unsurprising that regional development practitioners should pay close attention to their region's heritage, because this is a key asset. A region's heritage expresses its history, its identity, its significance – what makes it unique.

The most obvious use of heritage for regional development practitioners is to attract people in to a region – particularly in the sense of heritage tourism (see e.g. Timothy 2007). But the role of heritage in regional development goes well beyond heritage tourism. Exploring the concept of heritage can give deeper insight into the nature of the region itself, its identity, and its multiple and unique strengths. These, this paper argues, are the basis for any serious pursuit of sustainable, integrated and inclusive regional development.

The paper suggests a basic typology of approaches to heritage in regional and local development practice. Examples are used to illustrate three main types of approaches. By assessing one's own initiatives against these 'types', practitioners should find the typology a useful tool to encourage critical thinking about the assumptions, goals and likely outcomes of their heritage-based regional development initiatives.

2. THE TYPOLOGY

The typology presented in this paper is organised on a continuum according to the level of 'cultural integration' of any given heritage initiative. Cultural integration refers to the degree to which a development initiative reflects, builds

upon, and is suited to the particular characteristics of the local place and its people. Because *heritage* tells a story about a place, its people, and their identity, heritage is an expression of culture. Yet heritage initiatives designed to promote regional development do not necessarily present an accurate picture of local culture. Nor are they always designed to produce culturally integrated outcomes – that is, outcomes that are responsive to the needs and goals of the region's people. In practice, as the examples below will illustrate, heritage initiatives vary enormously in their level of cultural integration.

Why is cultural integration important? *Culture*, in its broad anthropological sense, refers to the shared understandings, values, rules, structures, meanings and so forth that a group of people share. Culture influences economic transactions, social relationships, and the nature of interactions between humans and the environment – thus the entire 'triple bottom line', economic, social and environmental (see e.g. Elkington 1998). All of the key components of sustainable regional development (environmental, social, economic, as well as 'cultural' in the sense of cultural expression) are seated firmly in a cultural context. Culture is the invisible medium that we fail to notice, but which can teach us a great deal about how development initiatives work or fail to work.

Any serious attempt at sustainable regional development must therefore take into account the cultural context underpinning the areas that the initiative is targeting. If the goal of an initiative is to create jobs, for instance, it is important to understand local work culture, the kinds of jobs that are in demand and the local constraints on getting and keeping jobs (which could be anything from lack of training to overriding family commitments, e.g. pressure to assume caring roles). Failure to place regional development initiatives in their larger cultural context risks misunderstanding and misinterpreting the goals and needs of communities in the region and proposing initiatives that clash with these communities' priorities and ways of doing things. This is one key reason why externally driven development initiatives often fail to produce the desired results for regional communities.

When considering heritage-based regional development initiatives, it is particularly easy to assess the level of cultural integration and particularly obvious when cultural integration is not present. This is because heritage initiatives draw specifically on culture and identity as regional development assets. The following typology identifies three approaches to heritage in regional development initiatives, from Type One – Integrated Use of Heritage to Type Three, where cultural integration is largely absent. The level of cultural integration is assessed through attention to: how heritage resources are identified; how heritage resources are developed and utilized; and the goals and projected outcomes of the initiative.

2.1 Type One: The Weaving – Integrated Use of Heritage

In a Type One approach, regional development practitioners understand in detail the heritage of their region: its culture, its history, the way of life of its people, their particular strengths and abilities and the assets of their region. Type One is the ideal: a culturally integrated approach to heritage that takes into

account multiple requirements and multiple opportunities. Particular heritage assets may be marketed to a wider audience, yet without losing their essential authenticity and cultural meaning. An example of Type One heritage development is given below:

ASUR (Anthropologists of the Southern Andes)

ASUR is an organisation which has developed a traditional weaving project with communities in southern Bolivia, beginning in the mid 1980s.¹ Working with Quechua-speaking rural communities in Chuquisaca and more recently, Potosí departments, the project helps weavers improve their skills in producing complex traditional handweavings (including recuperating lost designs). Through a well designed museum in the regional centre of Sucre and an attached shop, as well as facilitating participation in international cultural events, the project has successfully promoted these weavings as an artistic and cultural expression of the indigenous peoples of southern Bolivia (Jalq'a, Tarabuco, and more recently other cultural groups). Highly skilled weavers now take on the role of training others and supervising quality control, both within and beyond their own communities. Weaving provides an income-generating opportunity for many rural women which fits smoothly with their other domestic and farm duties, as well as a chance to develop their skill and prestige as weavers. Some women have had the opportunity to travel within Bolivia and abroad to demonstrate their weaving across cultures. Men have also become involved in tapestry-weaving and in local project management. For the indigenous peoples of the region, weaving is a longstanding and important part of their culture; this project has given them the opportunity to share and benefit from their weaving heritage while maintaining control over the production process and content.

Identifying heritage resources:

The resources (traditional weaving style and ability) were identified externally but already existed within the communities; weaving was still being practiced in the 1980s, though many of the finer techniques were being lost. Old weavings were sourced from museum collections to use as models, but these were from the same cultural groups as those involved in the project, and acknowledged by them as part of their own heritage.

Developing and utilising heritage resources:

The structure of the project evolved out of discussions with communities and was not externally imposed. Communities became involved by choice and have established local organisations which oversee project operations in each community. External project staff (not members of these communities) have often filled key operational and management roles, but over the life of the project weavers and their fellow community members have taken more of a leading role. The ASUR museum acts as an education and cross-cultural communication tool,

¹ For more details of this project, see Healy (2000) and Eversole (2006). ASUR also has a website: <http://www.asur.org.bo>.

providing insights into the larger context of Quechua culture in central Bolivia and the ways in which weavings express this.

Goals and projected outcomes:

The goals of the project are multidimensional, including not just income generation but also cultural preservation and restoration of high-quality artistic weaving as an active part of cultural practice. The project has achieved higher prices for weavings and more opportunities for weaving sales, as well as motivating the practice of quality artistic weaving, an activity with important cultural and heritage significance. Other outcomes include the creation of an important tourist attraction in the city of Sucre (the ASUR Museum and shop), increased opportunities for communication across cultural and social divides, and increased valuing and understanding of indigenous Bolivian culture by the non-indigenous public.

“Weaving” has been chosen as the metaphor for Type One heritage initiatives, because these are initiatives that incorporate many strands from the local and regional cultural context. Such initiatives draw upon cultural and heritage resources without devaluing or exploiting them, while remaining coherent with other aspects of the local and regional way of life. The process of developing heritage resources tends to be participatory and inclusive, valuing diverse local viewpoints. The solutions that the initiatives present are often multidimensional, providing several interlinked benefits.

2.2 Type Two: Big Things and Staged Stories – Isolated Use of Heritage

Perhaps the most common approach to heritage in regional development is to take and promote one aspect of a region’s story in isolation. The story in question is real, it is authentic, it is part of the regional culture – but no link is established between the initiative and its larger cultural context. The story in question may have little or nothing to do with daily life in the region. It is not particularly relevant or symbolic as a source of identity or meaning. Nor is the initiative developed in a way that links it with other aspects of the regional culture, such as local skills, local needs, or meaningful local participation. Examples of Type Two heritage developments are given below:

‘Ned Kelly’ and the Dinosaurs

Often a region has been home to a notable historical character. In some cases this character may have exercised a strong influence on the culture and way of life in the region. In many cases, however, a bit of fame or notoriety is enough to propel a historical character to heritage status as a source of marketable ‘identity’ for a region. Examples abound around the world, from the Hatfields and the McCoys in West Virginia and Kentucky (famous feuding families) to Ned Kelly in Victoria. Ned Kelly the bushranger is promoted through tourism brochures and a giant statue in the town of Glenrowan; travelling through Victoria, one enters ‘Kelly Country’ in which a number of towns appear to be competing for their slice of the ‘Kelly’ story. The giant statue of Ned Kelly calls

for attention, but with little substance: like the many giant vegetables, fruits, animals, and other characters constructed by small communities to represent some aspect of their current or past way of life (see e.g. Bell and Lyall 1995). They are categorised here as Type Two heritage initiatives: those with some limited cultural integration. Communities may feel a certain amount of ownership or pride in their 'big' object, character, or story (though not necessarily). These assets may emphasise some aspect of the local place that is, in some way, important to them (or not). Yet they are still single-note promotions with only limited relevance. In Sucre, Bolivia, the latest strategy is to place large, whimsical statues of dinosaurs throughout this Spanish-colonial-style city. These statues are intended to remind visitors that Sucre is the city with the dinosaur footprints, which can be seen preserved in stone on the edge of town.

Exotic Eco-Tourism in the Amazon

In many heritage tourism initiatives, local or regional heritage is repackaged for an external audience. In the repackaging process, heritage may easily become disarticulated from the real cultural context of local people. This has frequently been the fate of indigenous and exotic handicrafts, often redesigned to meet external market demands (see e.g. Nash 1993, Jain 1995). In the process, deeper cultural meanings and purposes are often lost, even as income-generation needs are met. This kind of repackaging may even happen to the local way of life itself, when local people attempt to repackage themselves for tourist consumption. They may offer aspects of their heritage in the form of a "staged" authenticity for visitors (see e.g. MacCannell 1973). An interesting example of the latter is given by Hutchins (2003) in his study of eco-tourism in the Ecuadorian Amazon. Hutchins observes that communities hosting eco-tourists frequently alter their own lifestyle to meet tourist expectation; examples include using native palm-fibre bags instead of backpacks, avoiding clothing with foreign words, and restricting the use of city-purchased housing materials, gas stoves, and generators. At the same time, tourism introduces new meanings and new tensions into existing communities. Hutchins speaks of the importance of communities being able to direct these processes of change themselves, with attention to both the tourism initiatives specifically and to the ways in which they affect other aspects of community life (2003:173) – that is, to the cultural integration of the heritage tourism initiative. He gives an example of a grassroots tourism association that has reinvested tourism profits in other aspects of community life and taken local control of tourism policies (2003:173). In doing so, this association has moved local ecotourism initiatives toward a Type One, culturally integrated approach.

Identifying heritage resources:

In the examples above, the heritage resources already existed in local communities, and local community members were aware of them. In some cases they were an integral part of local culture; in others simply an isolated aspect of it. In some cases, such as eco-tourism initiatives, outside intervention may have

helped community members recognise that their heritage was marketable and of external interest.

Developing and utilising heritage resources:

Heritage resources were developed to target and attract external consumers (primarily tourists). Locals may be among the key drivers of the initiatives, but nevertheless, initiatives demonstrate little attention to the broader context of local opportunities and local needs. The exception is the grassroots tourism association described by Hutchins (2003), which is pursuing a more culturally integrated approach.

Goals and projected outcomes:

The initiatives described above are targeted primarily toward generating tourist and visitor business, though the exact form this takes (e.g. creating greater visibility, getting traffic to stop and spend, drawing attention to key attractions) varies. These initiatives can thus be expected to have very different economic impacts (on income, jobs, etc.). Goals and outcomes overall are defined very narrowly; non-tourism economic opportunities, and improving other aspects of life in the region, are generally beyond the scope of these initiatives.

2.3 Type Three: The Imaginary Region – Inventing Heritage

The potential value of heritage for regional development initiatives has led some to employ the strategy, ‘If you don’t have it – invent it’. Of course, all regions have some heritage, but it may not be deemed exciting enough or unique enough to attract people in. Type Three heritage initiatives are works of inventive fiction. They are the ultimate example of regions ‘selling themselves’ to outsiders – but with no attention to the cultural context of the region itself. While cultural integration may not be completely absent (for instance initiatives might attempt to include different sectors of the community such as businesses and schools), such initiatives have no real heritage content. They may, however, lead to a surface re-creation of a new regional identity – though often, in a way that is oriented to external consumption rather than internal needs and goals.

Fantasy Towns

Small towns attempting to differentiate themselves from other small towns may be tempted to invent heritage as a way to make themselves visible. In this approach the target is principally outsiders; ‘heritage’ is created to attract tourists, other visitors, or even residents. One case of town identity being geared toward ‘consumption’ by outsiders is presented by Frenkel and Walton (2000) in their description of Bavarian Leavenworth, located in Washington State, USA. This town never had a Bavarian heritage – only a mountainous geography – but it was decided to pursue a Bavarian theme throughout the town as a strategy to distinguish this town from others, and to attract people in.

A particularly dramatic example of a fantasy town can be found in Sumter County, Florida, in a new housing development called Lake Sumter Landing. What is notable about this development is that the invented heritage of Lake

Sumter Landing is presented as if it were authentic history. Five years ago, the site of Lake Sumter Landing was farmland bordering Cherry Lake. Now, it claims to be a town on 'Lake Sumter' with a history dating back to the early nineteenth century.

Figure 1 provides some examples of the 'historical plaques' which are scattered throughout the town centre, giving the impression of a longstanding town heritage. Many of the residents and visitors are new to the region and would have no reason to question the veracity of the heritage stories; the small print on the plaques notes that they are 'Courtesy of the Lake Sumter Landing Historical Promotion League.' Longer-term residents know better, of course – but the new, developer-driven image of their region is disconnected from the region's existing cultural context.

Identifying heritage resources:

In Type Three initiatives such as those described above, heritage resources are not directly identified; rather, they are invented. Locals may or may not be involved in the process; however, Type Three approaches lend themselves most readily to being driven by outsiders or local special interest groups (including private enterprise).

Developing and utilising heritage resources:

The newly invented heritage resources are generally developed to achieve specific goals, such as attracting tourists (Bavarian Leavenworth) or new residents (Lake Sumter Landing). There is little or no relationship with any other aspect of the regional culture and way of life; in fact, existing culture and heritage may be intentionally obscured by the 'new image' invented for the region.

Goals and projected outcomes:

Type Three heritage initiatives focus on creating a new image for a town or region. The new image is not, however, culturally grounded or integrated with the existing regional culture. While as a marketing strategy these initiatives may attract business in, there are questions about whether this business can be leveraged for broader regional benefit, given the disconnect with local culture. In particular, when special interest groups drive such initiatives, the benefit may not reach beyond members of that group (e.g. housing developers and their dependent industries). There are also issues about potential conflict between old and new residents, when local culture is intentionally obscured in favour of a new regional image.

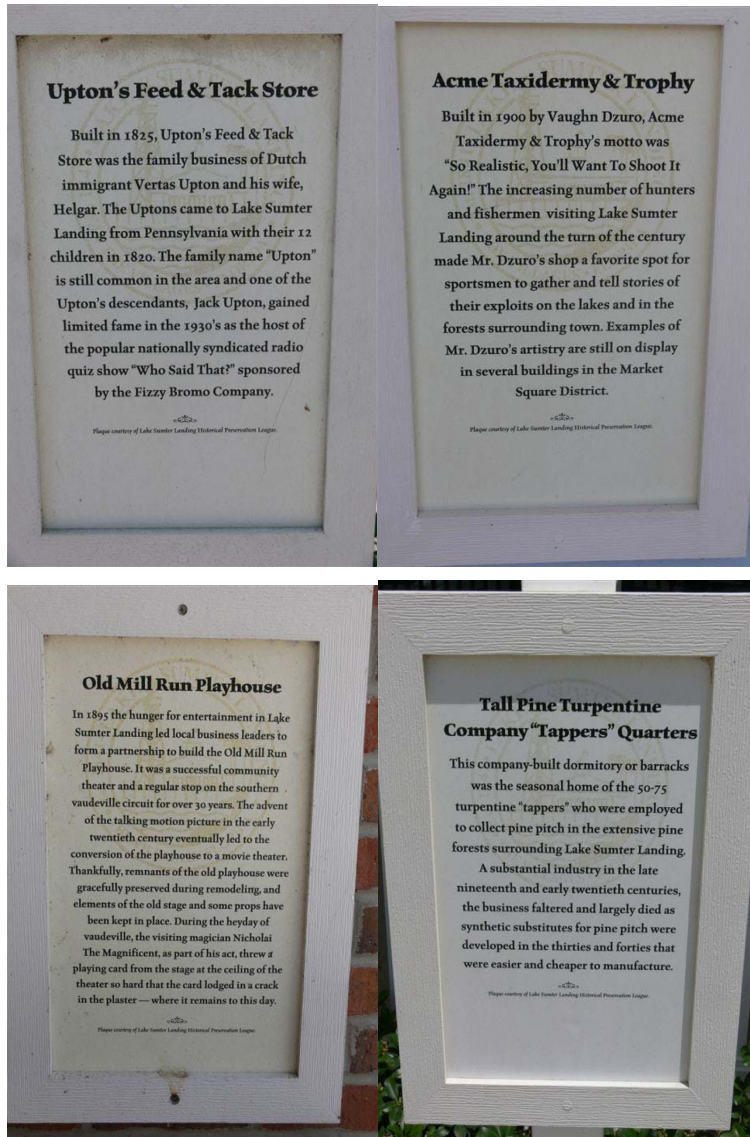


Figure 1. 'Historical Plaques' in Lake Sumter Landing, Florida

3. APPLYING THE TYPOLOGY

This typology of heritage initiatives in regional development has been offered to encourage critical thinking about how we ‘use’ heritage in regional development. It is intended to assist regional development practitioners and academics to recognise and evaluate the broad range of ways that heritage can be employed in regional development initiatives, and the varying outcomes that can be generated.

The typology suggests that regional development initiatives can be assessed according to their level of cultural integration. Applying the typology offers practitioners the opportunity to reflect on their own proposed or in-process initiatives. Are they more of a Type One, a Type Two, or a Type Three initiative? More culturally integrated initiatives (as per Type One) are more likely to deliver multidimensional outcomes across a broader range of regional stakeholders. Less culturally integrated initiatives (as per Type Three) are less likely to leverage existing regional opportunities or to meet the integrated economic, social, environmental and cultural needs and goals of a region and its people.

Reviewing the examples given above, it becomes apparent that cultural integration has many indicators. Cultural integration can operate at the level of concepts, meanings and values – for instance the deep cultural significance of weaving, or the Amazonian environment, for South American communities, as compared to the surface significance of a minor historical character or landmark. Cultural integration can also operate at the level of practical project implementation – How compatible is the initiative with existing activities and constraints? Does it draw constructively on the diverse assets of the region? Finally, cultural integration can be assessed in terms of an initiative’s overall regional development relevance – To what extent does it respond to needs and wants in a region, taking into account both the diversity of stakeholders and the various measures of ‘successful’ development (economic, social, environmental, cultural)?

Practitioners are encouraged to assess any heritage initiative against this typology to test its utility. As above, initiatives can be assessed with specific attention to:

- How heritage resources are identified (Identification process)
- How heritage initiatives are implemented (Implementation process)
- The kinds of outcomes that are likely to result from each approach (Outcomes).

Given the various indicators of cultural integration identified above, it would seem that a higher level of cultural integration can be pursued by:

- Identifying *significant* aspects of the region’s heritage;
- Implementing initiatives in a way that is *compatible with the way of life in the region* and takes into account *existing regional assets* (e.g. skills, abilities, institutions, infrastructure, landscapes); and
- Seeking outcomes that are *relevant to diverse stakeholders* and are

related to *all the measures of 'successful' development (economic, social, environmental, cultural)*.

This paper encourages practitioners to approach regional development as the quest for sustainable, integrated and inclusive outcomes. Heritage initiatives consciously draw upon a region's cultural assets; they thus call attention to the broader importance of culture in development processes. Culturally integrated development seats development initiatives firmly within the local or regional cultural context, moving the focus from opportunistic to sustainable processes, and from single-dimensional to multidimensional outcomes.

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