

Value Assessment and Public Perception from the Perspective of Heritage Diplomacy

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ABSTRACT

Heritage diplomacy plays multiple roles in global governance, and has gradually become a window for countries to display cultural diversity and national image. The value evaluation process of world heritage sites reflects the history and culture of the country as well as its contribution to global values. Heritage diplomacy helps to promote the value assessment of world heritage and public recognition and understanding, and enhance mutual understanding and trust among countries and ease international conflicts through mutual respect for each other's cultural heritage. The practice of multiple forms of heritage diplomacy shows that the global understanding of the value of cultural heritage is deepening, and its role in global governance is becoming more and more significant. It has become an important way to promote international cooperation, cultural exchanges and sustainable development.

KEYWORDS

heritage diplomacy; value assessment; public perception

1 Introduction

1.1 Definition and classification of World Heritage sites

World Heritage sites, as defined by UNESCO (UNESCO), are natural or cultural properties with outstanding universal values, which represent the history of the earth, its biodiversity, as well as its human creativity and spiritual values. World heritage sites are divided into two categories: cultural heritage and natural heritage. Cultural heritage includes material and intangible forms, such as historical buildings, archaeological sites, works of art, and traditional knowledge and practice. Natural heritage covers the biodiversity and natural beauty of the earth. There is also a mixed heritage (compound heritage), which has the outstanding universal value of both natural heritage and cultural heritage.

1.2 The concept and importance of legacy diplomacy

Heritage diplomacy refers to the promotion of cooperation and dialogue between countries through the protection, management and exchange of world heritage sites, so as to realize cultural understanding, peace and sustainable development. This form of diplomacy transcends traditional political and economic relations, emphasizes the application of cultural soft power, and promotes the international community to pay common attention to and protect the cultural and natural heritage shared by the world. As the relationship between cultural heritage protection and utilization is changing dynamically, with the increasing dependence of protection work on

"utilization", the double-sided influence of cultural tourism is also constantly attracting attention^[1]. Therefore, in heritage diplomacy, how to balance the protection and rational utilization of heritage is an important issue. At the same time, UNESCO takes culture as the "fourth pillar" of sustainable development, and emphasizes that the cultural heritage is closely linked to social development^[2], which further demonstrates the importance of cultural heritage in global governance.

1.3 Highlight the meaning and standard of universal value

Outstanding universal value (Outstanding Universal Value, OUV) is the core concept of world heritage, which refers to the inherent value of heritage, transcends the boundaries of a single country and region, and is of great significance to all mankind. UNESCO The World Heritage Convention lists the ten criteria to judge the outstanding universal value, covering history, science, art, culture and many other aspects. These standards include, but are not limited to: masterpieces representing the creative spirit of human beings, witnesses to the important stages of human history, and unique or typical natural phenomena. The selection process of world heritage sites is to confirm the global, irreplaceable and urgency of their protection through the strict evaluation of these criteria.

2 The historical evolution of heritage diplomacy

2.1 The Origin and Development of Heritage Diplomacy

Heritage diplomacy dates back to the ancient civilization period, when countries established and consolidated friendly relations by exchanging precious works of art and cultural heritage. For example, cultural exchanges between ancient Egypt and ancient Greece, as well as church and art exchanges between European countries during the medieval period, were early forms of heritage diplomacy. Over time, this concept took shape in international relations between the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when European countries began to value the protection of cultural heritage and regarded it as a symbol of national identity and cultural soft power.

In the middle of the 20th century, the founding of the UNESCO (UNESCO) provided an official international platform for heritage diplomacy. In 1954, the UNESCO adopted the Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in Armed Conflict, marking the beginning of the integration of heritage protection into the international legal framework. In 1972, UNESCO adopted the World Convention on Cultural and Natural Heritage, thus the formal concept of heritage diplomacy was born, and countries began to demonstrate their cultural value and historical status by applying for world heritage sites.

2.2 Establishment of international cooperation and establishment of heritage protection mechanism

The development of heritage diplomacy is accompanied by the deepening of international cooperation, and countries have promoted cross-cultural exchanges and understanding through the joint protection and management of world heritage sites. UNESCO The establishment of the World Heritage Committee, the World Heritage Center and the World Heritage Fund provides coordination and financial support for the protection of global heritage sites. The signing of international documents such as the Convention on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage has further expanded the scope of heritage diplomacy to cover intangible culture and underwater heritage.

International organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have also played an important role in heritage protection. For example, organizations such as the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the World Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) provide expertise and advice on the assessment and conservation of heritage. These cooperation mechanisms not only enhance the professionalism of heritage protection, but also provide a platform for cooperation and dialogue among countries.

2.3 The role of legacy diplomacy in global governance

Heritage diplomacy plays multiple roles in global governance, and has increasingly become a window for countries to display their cultural diversity and national image. The list of World Heritage sites reflects not only the national history and culture, but also its contribution to global values. Heritage diplomacy helps to promote peace and understanding, and by sharing and respecting each other's cultural heritage, countries can enhance mutual understanding and trust, and ease international conflicts.

Legacy diplomacy is also a part of the Sustainable Development Goals. Conservation and management of world heritage sites are often closely linked to sustainable tourism, environmental protection, and community development. Through heritage protection, countries can promote a green economy and achieve a balanced development of society, economy and the environment. Heritage diplomacy also contributes to global knowledge sharing and education, and through heritage education programs, people around the world can learn about the wisdom and history of different cultures. The historical evolution of heritage diplomacy reflects the deepening global understanding of the value of cultural heritage, and its increasingly prominent role in global governance, and has become an important means to promote international cooperation, cultural exchanges and sustainable development.

3 The evaluation system that highlights the universal value

3.1 Analysis of evaluation criteria and procedures

The outstanding universal value of the World Heritage (Outstanding Universal Value, OUV) is the core basis for the UNESCO World Heritage Committee to evaluate and determine whether a heritage can be included in the World Heritage List. This value reflects the cultural or natural value of a heritage for all mankind, and transcends the boundaries of countries and regions. The evaluation criteria mainly include the following aspects:

- (1) Standard (i): represents a unique and creative artistic or architectural achievement;
- (2) Standard (ii): has had a significant impact on the development of human thought, belief, art or science in a certain period of time;
- (3) Standard (iii): it is an important witness of a certain historical stage or cultural tradition;
- (4) Standard (iv): it typically represents a certain type or way of human activity, or shows the mutual relationship between human beings and the environment;
- (5) Standard (v): constitutes a unique, or endangered, natural phenomenon or biological community;
- (6) Standard (vi): Direct or obvious connection to significant historical events, traditions, thoughts, beliefs, literary works, or works of art.

The evaluation process is rigorous and complex, including preliminary nominations, on-site visits by international experts, World Heritage Center reviews, comments from professional advisory bodies, and a final vote by the World Heritage Committee. Governments are required to submit

detailed nomination documents, including the background, characteristics, conservation status, and management plans of the heritage site. However, the "outstanding universal value" (OUV) evaluation problem of the world heritage has always been the problem of interpretation differences under the global vision and local artistic conception^[3]. This difference is not only reflected between expert evaluation and public evaluation, but also between different countries and regions. Therefore, how to construct the international consensus of cultural heritage value in heritage diplomacy is a cross-regional and cross-cultural challenge.

3.2 Case analysis: Success and controversy coexist

3.2.1 Success cases: The Great Wall of China

The Great Wall, as a world cultural heritage site, is not only an outstanding representative of ancient China's military defense system, but also shows the innovation in the standard (ii) and the historical witness in the (iii). The construction of the Great Wall began in the 7th century BC, spanning many dynasties, and its unique construction techniques, such as hollow castles and beacon towers, have had a profound impact on the global architectural art. The diversity and regional cultures along the Great Wall, from mountains to steppe deserts, have witnessed the social changes, economic activities and human adaptation and transformation to the natural environment in different historical periods. However, the protection status of the Great Wall has also attracted attention. The damage and natural erosion in some areas remind us that continuous efforts still need to be made for the protection and inheritance of cultural heritage.

3.2.2 Dispute case: Australia's Great Barrier Reef

The nomination controversy for the Great Barrier Reef highlights the tension between the natural phenomenon value of standards (v) and the cultural relevance of (vi) and environmental protection. As the largest coral reef system in the world, the Great Barrier Reef is an important treasure house of biodiversity and is closely related to human survival. However, the ocean acidification and rising water temperature caused by global warming, as well as human factors such as overfishing and pollution, make the Great Barrier Reef face a serious ecological crisis. This case has prompted reflections on whether the assessment of world heritage sites should focus more on protecting the current status and future sustainability, rather than relying solely on historical or scientific merit. In the course of deliberation, the World Heritage Committee needs to balance the protection and utilization to ensure the long-term survival of the heritage.

3.2.3 Case comparison: The Grand Canyon in the United States

The Grand Canyon, meeting the standard (vi) cultural value and (v) natural phenomena, is a profound understanding of the geological history of the earth. However, the protection of the Grand Canyon is also facing controversy, including the balance between mineral mining, tourism development and ecological protection. This case reveals that the combination of its environmental, social and economic impacts must be considered to achieve sustainable management.

Together, these cases reveal the complexity of the world heritage assessment, which involves not only the assessment of historical and cultural values, but also the reflection of current and future conservation challenges. The overall value of the heritage, and strategies for conservation, management, and sustainability need to be fully considered in the evaluation process. This requires the participation of governments, professional institutions and the public to ensure that the protection of world heritage sites is effectively promoted while maintaining its outstanding

universal value.

3.3 Challenges and improvement directions in the evaluation

The challenges in the evaluation process mainly include the fairness of the nomination, the sustainability of heritage protection and the fairness of resource allocation. Due to resource and technical limitations, some countries and regions may be difficult to fully demonstrate the outstanding universal value of heritage. Some nominations may focus too much on the economic value of tourism and ignore the long-term protection of cultural heritage.

Direction for improvement may include increased transparency about the nomination process, enhanced international technical assistance, and a more rigorous assessment of the conservation status and management capacity of heritage. The sensitivity to global threats such as climate change needs to be increased to ensure that listed legacies receive sustained attention and protection. Encouraging public participation and raising community awareness is also an important part of improving the assessment system.

4 World Heritage and cultural heritage diplomacy

4.1 Diplomatic value of cultural heritage

Cultural heritage is the witness of human history, and it carries the collective memory and cultural identity of the nation. They are not only symbols of national status, but also Bridges to promote cross-cultural exchanges. This means that in heritage diplomacy, cooperation and cultural exchanges between countries are an important way to enhance the awareness of the value of world heritage. Cultural heritage can become an important part of a country's soft power, and enhance the country's international influence by displaying the country's cultural heritage and historical depth. The protection and sharing of cultural heritage helps to enhance mutual understanding and respect among countries and promote world peace and development.

At the same time, in recent years, with the rapid improvement of China's comprehensive national strength and the continuous promotion of cultural heritage protection and inheritance work, the value concept and utilization mode of world heritage are also experiencing the change of development thinking^[4]. This shows that in the heritage diplomacy, the country's cultural confidence and the improvement of the international discourse power are also the key factors. The establishment of a knowledge system and discourse system of cultural heritage based on local values and highly recognized internationally is crucial to enhance the international status of cultural heritage^[5]. For example, China's Silk Road and the Central axis of Beijing have both further become important platforms for global cultural exchanges through UNESCO's World Heritage List.

4.2 The Practice and Strategy of Cultural Heritage Diplomacy

The practice of cultural heritage diplomacy involves various cooperation, including the protection, research, display and education of heritage. Countries work themselves to the protection of cultural heritage by signing international agreements, such as the World Heritage Convention. Strategically, governments display and promote their cultural heritage by organizing international exhibitions, cultural exchange activities and academic seminars. For example, Japan's "National Treasure Tour Exhibition" and the Louvre International Cooperation project in France are both successful cultural heritage diplomatic practices. Using digital technologies, such as virtual reality and online exhibitions, enables global audiences to cross geographical boundaries and share

the charm of cultural heritage.

4.3 Achievements and prospects of Cultural Heritage Diplomacy

Cultural heritage diplomacy has achieved remarkable results around the world, promoting international cultural dialogue and enhancing the cultural awareness of global citizens. For example, through the joint management of world heritage sites, countries have shared the cultural heritage protection technology, funds and human resources, and improved the protection effect. However, cultural heritage diplomacy also faces challenges, such as the balance between protection and development, the commercialization of cultural heritage and excessive tourism. In the future, cultural heritage diplomacy needs to explore new cooperation models to ensure the sustainability of cultural heritage, such as public-private cooperation, regional cooperation, and the use of scientific and technological means to enhance the accessibility and educational value of cultural heritage. With the deepening of globalization, cultural heritage diplomacy will play a more important role in promoting international understanding, cultural diversity and global peace.

5 NGO and public involvement in heritage diplomacy

5.1 Role of NGOs in legacy diplomacy

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play an indispensable role in heritage diplomacy, serving as a bridge and a catalyst on the international stage. Many internationally renowned cultural and natural heritage conservation organizations, such as the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the World Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the International Centre for the Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), have provided professional advice and practical experience in the assessment, conservation and management of world heritage sites. These organizations drive a global consensus on heritage conservation by fostering cooperation and dialogue among countries by setting standards, providing technical support and training, and advocating for public education.

5.2 The Importance of public participation in heritage protection

Public participation is a key component of heritage protection, which not only enhances the sustainability of heritage protection, but also enhances the social value of the heritage. Public participation can ensure the democracy and inclusiveness of heritage conservation decision-making, giving community members the opportunity to express their insights and needs about cultural heritage. Public participation helps to improve the awareness of heritage protection, promote the inheritance and activation of cultural heritage, and make the heritage become the carrier of community identity and cultural identity. Through volunteer activities, public education programs, and community-involved restoration efforts, the public is able to be directly involved in the preservation and management of the heritage, thus enhancing the sense of belonging and responsibility to the heritage.

5.3 Ways to enhance public awareness and participation

Increasing public awareness and participation requires many efforts. Education is the foundation, spreading the importance of heritage protection and fostering public awareness of the value of heritage through schools, public lectures, exhibitions and online resources. Government and NGOs should encourage and support community participation in the protection of the heritage through

the establishment of funds and providing training and tools. Using social media and digital technologies, such as virtual reality experiences and online platforms, can attract more young people to participate, making heritage preservation more attractive and interactive. Developing and implementing public-friendly policies, such as citizen-participation regulations, can provide legal safeguards for public participation. By establishing incentive mechanisms, such as recognizing outstanding heritage protection programs and individuals, it can stimulate public engagement and innovation.

Through these channels, the close cooperation between NGOs and the public can build a diversified, inclusive and effective heritage protection network, promote the in-depth development of heritage diplomacy, and jointly safeguard the cultural heritage shared by mankind.

6 Conclusions and Outlook

World heritage diplomacy has made remarkable achievements in the past few decades, which has not only promoted the historical and cultural exchanges among countries, but also strengthened the awareness of global heritage protection. Through the UNESCO (UNESCO) World Heritage List, countries have recognized and protected many cultural and natural heritages of outstanding universal value. The conservation and management of these heritages, such as the Great Wall of China, Venice and its lagoons in Italy, the Pyramids in Egypt, and the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, not only show the diversity of human civilization, but also leave valuable knowledge and inspiration for future generations.

The contribution of heritage diplomacy is not limited to the protection of heritage itself, it also promotes international cooperation and the sharing of law, technology and capital among countries. Through international seminars, joint conservation projects and cultural exchanges, governments and non-governmental organizations have been able to conduct deep cooperation in the field of heritage protection, raising the level of global heritage protection. Heritage diplomacy is also an important embodiment of soft power, which displays the country's cultural charm and historical heritage, and enhances the international image of the country. Faced with the complexity and urgency of heritage protection, the importance of international cooperation is self-evident. States should work together to strengthen legislative and policy coordination in the protection of heritage and jointly to formulate and implement stricter standards to prevent the destruction and illegal trade of heritage.

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