



Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca
I028 – ESAME DI STATO DI ISTRUZIONE SECONDARIA SUPERIORE

Indirizzi: IT04 – TURISMO, EA07 – ESABAC, EA27 – ESABAC TECHNO

Tema di: LINGUA INGLESE

PART 1: Reading Comprehension

Unesco-cide: does world heritage status do cities more harm than good?

The gambling-ridden clan jetties of Malaysia's George Town were saved from ruin by the award of Unesco world heritage status, but their new fame left locals overwhelmed by a tide of invasive tourism. Can we ever get the balance right?

Chew Jetty in Malaysia's George Town attracts tourists by the boatload. Historic homes are now commercial stalls branded with neon signs; one-time fishermen peddle T-shirts, magnets and postcards. Tour buses deposit vacationers from early in the morning until well after sunset. The daily intrusion has clearly taken a toll: windows are boarded, "no photo" signs are pervasive, and tenants quickly vanish at the sight of a foreign face.

"I would like to remind people that we are not monkeys, and this is not a zoo," says Lee Kah Lei, who runs a souvenir stall outside her home on the Chew Jetty. Although Kah Lei notes that "the more people who come here, the more the shopkeepers sell," she wishes camera-wielding tourists were respectful of her privacy – and especially not duck into her home uninvited.

Once, the "clan jetties" on the outskirts of George Town on Penang island, were a bustling seafront hub. A ramshackle collection of stilt houses and sheds, stretching along a line of wooden piers each bearing the surname of its Chinese clan, they are one of the last intact bastions of Malaysia's old Chinese settlements. The seven remaining jetties survived two world wars and Japanese occupation, but as the decades wore on the piers deteriorated. [...] There was only one place to turn: they made an 11th-hour bid to Unesco for protection. The effort succeeded. In 2008 the clan jetties were awarded Unesco world heritage status – though not before two of the clan enclaves had been razed to make way for a housing complex.

Now, however, residents say the victory was not what they hoped for at all. Where fishermen, oyster harvesters and fortune tellers once plied their trade, souvenir vendors and snack bars have taken root. The locals say they were caught unawares by a tide of tourism that has washed over their stilt village. It's a similar complaint that has resounded across Europe this summer, as cities from Barcelona to Venice try to balance the positive effects of tourism with the inevitable downsides.

"We would be gone today if not for the Unesco listing," admits Chew Siew Pheng, [a local resident, but] it has also "affected our privacy. Our jetty has become commercialised. People are moving. During the December holidays like Chinese New Year and Malay Raya, it's not even a place to live."

Many of the 1,052 destinations across the world that have been stamped with United Nations world heritage status struggle to strike the balance between the economic benefits of catering to visitors and preserving the culture that drew the recognition. [...] By raising the international profile of a location, the label also fuels a rush of visitors and opens the door to commercialisation that can dilute the site's authenticity.

The phenomenon has even been given a name by Italian writer Marco d'Eramo, who argued in New Left Review that Unesco preserves buildings but allows the communities around them to be destroyed, often by tourism. He called it "*Unesco-cide*".



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- 40 Laos' Luang Prabang, for example, a world heritage town of around 50,000 people, now expects to attract more than 700,000 tourists by 2018. Researcher Chloe Maurel has written about the adverse effects of the status on the historic Casco Viejo neighbourhood in Panama City, which relegated its poorest inhabitants to the city limits following its Unesco validation – while the central district was flooded with tourists. National Geographic has documented examples such as Xian, China, site of the famous terracotta warriors, where a poorly situated new museum may have negatively impacted the precious site [and] activity close to the Belize Barrier Reef, where developers are closing in and exploiting the region's world heritage status to sell swamp land to customers over the internet.
- 45 Clement Liang, a member of the Penang Heritage Trust who helped lobby for the clan jetties' inclusion in George Town's world heritage zone, agreed that when commercial interests are on the line, they "override the idealistic notion of preserving the character of a heritage site". He added "currently Unesco has no clear guidelines or effective methods to control the commercialisation of world heritage sites, and its talk on sustainability is more a verbal exercise than enforceable policy".

[731 words]

Laignee Barron, George Town, Malaysia 19/09/2017

Available online: <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/aug/30/unescocide-world-heritage-status-hurt-help-tourism>

Accessed on March 24th 2018

Refer to the text to answer the following questions. Use complete sentences and your own words.

1. What has happened to Chew Jetty since it was awarded world Heritage status?
2. What does Kah Lei not like about the tourists' behaviour?
3. Why did Chew Jetty apply for World Heritage Status?
4. Did the local people expect this to happen? Justify your answer by referring to the text.
5. Both Ka Lei and Chew Siew Pheng can see a positive and a negative side: what do they each say?
6. Many World Heritage sites "*struggle to strike the balance between the economic benefits of catering to visitors and preserving the culture that drew the recognition*" (lines 30-31). What is the problem?
7. Define "*Unesco-cide*" in your own words.
8. Four other sites with problems are described in the text as well as Chew Jetty. What type of problems does each one face?
9. According to Clement Laing what happens when commercial interests are involved?
10. Laing also says that Unesco's talk of sustainability "*is more a verbal exercise than enforceable policy*." (line 49) What does he mean by that?



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PART 2: Writing

Choose either A or B. Clearly mark your choice on your exam paper by writing “A” or “B”

A. “It is an inevitable destiny: the very reasons why a property is chosen for inscription on the world heritage list are also the reasons why millions of tourists flock to those sites year after year,” (Francesco Bandarin, former world heritage director at Unesco). Think of a place, a village, town or city that you know, or have read about, which has a high tourist presence either constant or seasonal. Describe both the advantages and the disadvantages for both the site you have chosen and for the community there, then choose one problem and suggest how you would improve the situation in a report of about 300 words.

Or

B. Your favourite town, village, building, beauty spot, local tradition, etc. has been awarded world heritage status. You are aware that it will not be easy to keep the Heritage site or activity safe from changes that will destroy it. How would you, a local tourism consultant, manage the beneficial aspects and protect it from the negative? Write a proposal of about 300 words for your local council.

Durata massima della prova: 6 ore.

È consentito soltanto l'uso dei dizionari monolingue e bilingue.

Non è consentito lasciare l'Istituto prima che siano trascorse 3 ore dalla dettatura del tema.