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## Coastal cultural heritage: A resource to be included in integrated coastal zone management

Sorna Khakzad <sup>a, \*</sup>, Marnix Pieters <sup>b</sup>, Koenraad Van Balen <sup>c</sup><sup>a</sup> KU Leuven, 01 Arenberg Castle, RLICC Office, Heverlee 3001, Belgium<sup>b</sup> Flanders Heritage Agency, Maritiem en Onderwater Erfgoed, Phoenixgebouw, Koning Albert II-laan 19 Bus 5, 1210 Brussel, Belgium<sup>c</sup> KU Leuven Department of Civil Engineering, Kasteelpark Arenberg 40 – Box, 2448, 3001 Leuven, Belgium

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### ABSTRACT

Maritime and coastal cultural landscape, encompassing land and sea, and underwater is an important part of our cultural resources in the coastal areas. Although, integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) has theoretically addressed the importance of cultural ecosystems, cultural resources have mostly been overlooked in holistic coastal management plans. Overlooking cultural resources results in loss of cultural identity associated with certain habitats; loss of tourism, recreational and educational opportunities; decline in local ecological knowledge, skills and technology pertaining to habitat management; and loss of opportunities for social and cultural capital. Literature and practice show that there is no proper definition and evaluation of coastal cultural heritage is available and coastal cultural heritage has not been considered as a resource with high level of benefit for development and people. Acknowledging the importance of coastal cultural heritage as a resource in ICZM, and the role that ICZM can play in linking land and sea management approaches highlights the necessity of new methods for defining and evaluation of coastal cultural heritage. This paper proposes models and guidelines for defining and evaluating coastal cultural heritage to be included in Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and ICZM as a resource through application of the integrative complexity theory and learning from the experiences in management of other coastal resources. The results will be an integrative evaluation method and a guideline for delineating coastal cultural areas. The method and tool will be examined through the case of Ostend in Belgium.

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## 1. Introduction

Cultural Heritage is “that part of the past which we select in the present for contemporary purposes, be they economic, cultural, political, or social” (Graham, 2002). Human interaction with seas and oceans in the coastal areas influenced the natural landscape and has a crucial role in the formation of maritime and coastal cultural heritage. Maritime and coastal cultural heritage, encompassing land and sea, and underwater, is an important part of our cultural resources and requires a proper valorization in order to play its role in sustainable development for poverty reduction, livelihood promotion, education, and environmental protection (Campbell, 2000; LGA report, 2002: 14), and helps to promote

people's sense of identity and place attachment (Salmons, 2007). However, the task of including coastal cultural resources in holistic management plans of the coastal areas has been complicated by an array of natural, economic, social and political factors.

Considering that holistic means that each element can receive its significance only by its position and relationship with the surrounding elements and multiple dimensions and control groups, the main objective of this research is to highlight the significance of coastal cultural heritage as a resource to be included in MSP and ICZM. The sub-objectives of this research are to offer: 1) a framework for balanced evaluation of coastal cultural heritage as a resource among other resources; and 2) a conceptual basis to define the area of cultural significance in the coastal areas. The framework consists of an interdisciplinary and integrative system for evaluation of coastal cultural heritage. The tool to define the area of coastal cultural heritage—which is going to be called coastal cultural middle ground—is a complementary tool to MSP that will offer a methodology to delineate the extent of coastal cultural

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [sorna\\_serena@yahoo.com](mailto:sorna_serena@yahoo.com) (S. Khakzad), [marnix.pieters@rwo.vlaanderen.be](mailto:marnix.pieters@rwo.vlaanderen.be) (M. Pieters), [koenraad.vanbalen@bwk.kuleuven.be](mailto:koenraad.vanbalen@bwk.kuleuven.be) (K. Van Balen).

resources in the terrestrial and marine environment.

In Europe integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) are the most accepted holistic approaches for management of the coastal areas. ICZM is a process for the management of the coast using an approach that integrates all aspects of the coastal zone in order to balance environmental, economic, social, cultural and recreational objectives in an attempt to achieve sustainability (Hopkins et al., 2012; Hopkins and Bailley, 2013). Through an integrative approach, ICZM tries to avoid fragmentation and sectorial management which are results of the split in jurisdiction among different levels of government, and in the land–water interface. As a tool to ICZM, Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is a key ingredient in achieving integrated management of the coastal area and its resources (Douve et al., 2007). MSP is a public process for analyzing and planning the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas to achieve economic, environmental and social objectives (UNESCO, MSP). ICZM and MSP are engrained in the Ecosystem Approach, which acknowledges human with his cultural diversity as an integral component of ecosystem (Convention on Biological Diversity, 1993).

ICZM and MSP have tried to address cultural resources to some extent and the identification and protection of cultural heritage is seen as a social benefit derived from MSP. In Europe, the UK, the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium are well advanced in supporting MSP, either at legal or at policy level, or both. However, the protection of underwater and coastal cultural heritage is not a priority in those countries that are on the forefront of MSP. Recently, at the European level, the new Marine Directive (2014) states that underwater cultural heritage requires an integrated planning and management approach, and should be included in the establishment and implementation of marine spatial planning (Directive 2014/89/EU, 2014). However, specific frameworks and guidelines for evaluating the significance of cultural heritage as a resource for inclusion in MSP and ICZM have not yet been properly explored (Craig, 2004; Doody, 2004). Although, there are regulations at different local, national and international levels to protect and preserve coastal cultural heritage (Santoro et al., 2014; Ehler and Douve, 2009), most policy documents and scientific literature have so far ignored coastal and underwater cultural heritage as a valuable resource to be taken into account in MSP (Europa web portal, 2011). This trend can be seen in most coastal management plans and even in new established holistic resources management policies, and was apparent at the Third ICZM Conference, held in Antalya, Turkey in October 2014.

The present study is a part of a project carried out on behalf of the Flemish government: the IWT/SBO project: SEARCH. Archaeological Heritage in the North Sea, which aims to develop an efficient evaluation method and proposals for sustainable management of coastal cultural heritage in Belgian Part of the North Sea. Part of the SEARCH objectives is to define coastal cultural heritage and to evaluate cultural heritage as a resource in order to integrate coastal cultural heritage into MSP and ICZM. In the next sections, first an overview of the state of coastal cultural heritage in ICZM and MSP in several countries will be presented, and then the models and tools will be developed according to the highlighted issues, and finally the developed models and tools will be examined for the case of Belgian Part of the North Sea in Ostend.

## 2. An overview of the state of coastal cultural heritage in ICZM and MSP

Regarding a holistic approach towards coastal cultural heritage management among several countries, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and England have given especial attention to coastal cultural heritage to

be considered as another resource in the coastlines. These countries recognized the importance of multidisciplinary approach as a foundation for Integrated Coastal Zone Management. As Vallega states multidisciplinary evaluation approach of coastal cultural heritage is necessary for integrating coastal cultural heritage as a resource in holistic coastal management plans (Vallega, 2003; Pinder and Vallega, 2003). In the framework of an integrated management policy, coastal cultural heritage should be evaluated considering the global change, economic systems and geopolitical fluctuations (Callegari and Vallega, 2002; Pinder, 2003) in order to include the historical assets in development plans (Vallega, 2001).

An example of initiatives in Italy is the guidelines for management of coastal cultural heritage. These guidelines deal with conceptual and methodological frameworks, and provide operational approaches for decision makers on local level for the coastal resources (Callegari and Vallega, 2002). The goal of this management plan is to offer a methodology to evaluate coastal cultural heritage in the framework of an integrated management policy, considering the global change, economic systems and geopolitical changes. The idea was applied to coastal areas in Italy and several islands. This strategy helps focus shifts to the cultural heritage in the coastal areas—on-land and underwater—by including the historical assets in development plans (Vallega, 2001).

In addressing management of coastal cultural heritage, Spain detected a series of general problems such as lack of a precise definition of Underwater Cultural Heritage in Spanish Law (Law 16/1985) and the need for specific evaluation criteria and documentation guidelines create a proper management plan. Spain recognizes that Underwater Cultural Heritage should not be vulnerable to sectorial regulations and should be designed so that the government body responsible for cultural heritage can take part in the decisions on the use and exploitation of the marine environment (Spain Ministry of Culture, 2009).

In the framework of the EU and its recommendation for ICZM, the UK adopted the Ecosystem Approach. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) describes an Ecosystem Approach as “a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way”. The Approach adopted by the CBD looks beyond ‘natural’ ecosystems to include social, cultural and economic factors which are wholly interdependent with biodiversity and ecosystem goods and services. UK recognized the importance of marine environment, and now ICZM programs are implemented by coastal partnerships at the sub national level in an ad hoc manner, despite the lack of national coastal policy (Cummins et al., 2004a, b).

Portugal has acknowledged the pressure induced by urban development and economic activities on not only the natural environment, but also cultural heritage sites, and urban seafarers in the coastal areas. In order to improve policies and coastal planning and management, Portugal has developed a set of coastal zone management plans (Taveira-Pinto, 2004) which are founded on eight ‘Principal Objectives’, one of which has focus on cultural heritage: ‘Conservation of Resources, Natural and Landscape Heritage’, both in the marine and terrestrial components (Veloso-Gomes et al., 2008; Veloso-Gomes and Taveira-Pinto, 2003). However, in general, less attention has been given to the cultural heritage management, until about 2004, that the value of heritage was more recognized for cultural-tourism promotion.

Studies in other parts of the world (e.g. North Carolina, USA, Australia, New Zealand) also showed that neglecting cultural heritage values in holistic management plans, either tangible, or intangible, results in loss of local, national and sometime international cultural values that can benefit people in different ways (Jacobson, 2012; Khakzad, 2012; Cummins et al., 2010; Commonwealth of Australia, 2006; Bone, 1997; AIMA, 1994).

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