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Please provide a 500 words abstract outlining your thesis; you may wish to attach a table of contents or any other relevant material:

**Clarification of the Concepts, Requirements and Processes
for the Comparative Analysis portion of a
World Heritage Nomination Document.**

Introduction

The name Pimachiowin Aki is an Ojibwe term referring to ‘the land that gives life’. Aboriginal cultural landscapes are living and evolving landscapes that encompass the spiritual world of the people associated with them as well as the environment that impacts their daily lives. Aboriginal traditional ecological knowledge connects the spirit to the land through narratives, sacred sites and behavioural patterns. There is an intimate connection between humans, animal movements and the land.

Outstanding can be defined as something that stands out from the rest by being prominent or, conspicuous. Universal can be defined as including the whole of something specified or occurring everywhere. Outstanding Universal Value refers to outstanding universal value based upon the enormous wealth and diversity of cultural heritage worldwide.

Recently, there have been increased nominated sites put forward as cultural landscapes. This category is valuable as it allows properties to be nominated from regions where discrete monuments are not prominent but where distinctive landscapes reflect human interventions. Currently there are no existing or tentative World Heritage Sites located within Manitoba or Ontario. The establishment of the Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Site would help to fill the gap by providing representation of the Canadian boreal shield ecozone.

To date, the boreal forests are one of the biome types with relatively limited coverage on the World Heritage List. Nature and culture are not separate; rather they are inter-related, consisting of significant linkages. The Pimachiowin Aki area is an example of traditional use by Aboriginal peoples within the boreal forest and represents the interaction between culture, human interaction and the environment.

Questions

The following questions were identified as integral to focus the direction of the research throughout the thesis process:

1. What constitutes a good comparative analysis process?
2. How will the researcher choose the specific sites to compare Pimachiowin Aki too?
3. How does Pimachiowin Aki compare to the selected sites?
4. How is ‘outstanding universal value’ demonstrated within a comparative analysis?

Purpose

To clarify the concepts, requirements and processes for a comparative analysis of a World Heritage nomination document using cultural criteria.

Objectives

The objectives of the thesis are to:

1. Develop a comprehensive rationale and approach for identifying sites that will be applied to the comparative analysis portion of the Pimachiowin Aki nomination document.
2. Develop a 'Best Practices' approach to perform a comparative analysis for the Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage nomination document.
3. Examine what 'Outstanding Universal Value' is and how it is demonstrated.

Objectives & Methods

Objective 1

The first objective aims at developing the rational and methodology for identifying the specific sites for the comparative analysis.

1. Identify the two lists.
2. Describe the data matrix.
3. Review the lists already generate by Parks Canada and IISD to determine and review their best practices approach.
4. Literature review of the characteristics of the Anishinabe and the Ojibwe cultures as well as the natural environment of the Pimachiowin Aki proposed site to assist with narrowing the selection criteria of comparison sites.
5. Literature review of World Heritage information including Operation Guidelines (ICCOMOS), various nomination documents and historic background literature to identify established methods used in selecting sites for comparison and to reduce the list of potential sites for the Pimachiowin Aki nomination.

Objective 2

The second objective aims to develop a best practices approach for the comparative analysis based on information published by the World Heritage Centre including guidelines from IUCN and OCCOMOS, Operational Guidelines, documents from Parks Canada and the IISD and selected nomination documents.

1. Best practices will be identified through the literature review of World Heritage information including Operational Guidelines, Manuals developed by ICCOMOS and IUCN to assist with World Heritage nominations. Nomination documents selected through objective 1 will also be reviewed to develop a best practices approach.
2. The researcher will use both a grounded analysis and content analysis approach while reviewing the comparative analyses within the selected nomination documents and other manuals to allow the themes for best practices embedded within the various nomination documents to emerge from the data.
3. A WEFT approach will be utilized. WFT QDA software offers a generic set of facilities for working with text documents using coding statistics and cross-tabulations to identify categories. With the support of WEFT, the researcher will search through a set of nomination documents and return all occurrences of a given word or phrase that will then be coded by category. As categories, themes, ideas and coincidences emerge from the data analysis of the nomination documents they will be coded and entered in the data matrix. The categories, themes, ideas and coincidences within the data matrix will then be displayed and become the 'best practices'.
4. The e-mail interviews will also contribute to objective two to determine if there are additional nominations that are outside of the original sample that could also contribute to the comparative analysis.

Objective 3

The third objective focuses on how 'outstanding universal value' is demonstrated within a comparative analysis.

1. A pool of qualified scholars and experts including those who have been involved in writing, evaluating and being members of evaluation committees in regards to comparative analysis projects and nomination documents will be established.
2. A pre-test of the e-mail interview will be administered to Susan Buggy (regional expert and member of the Pimachiowin Aki Board) to ensure that the interview will be successful and gather the intended results.
3. The researcher will complete an e-mail interview questionnaire where individuals involved with the development and evaluation of specific nomination documents will be sampled. The e-mail interview will pose approximately five questions to clarify the processes used to complete the comparative analysis portion of the nomination document as well as to gain a greater understanding of the term 'outstanding universal value' and how it is exemplified.
4. The third objective will also use the literature review methods related to the official guidelines from the World Heritage Centre including ICCOMOS and IUCN and the selected nomination documents.