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Conclusion Heritage in the Age of Globalisation

Lilia Makhloufi

This book, *Tangible and Intangible Heritage in the Age of Globalisation*, has highlighted different case studies analysed by researchers and practitioners from various backgrounds and countries. Among the contributors were architects, urban planners, landscape architects, historians, sociologists, archaeologists as well as heritage marketing, museum and cultural tourism professionals. They analysed local heritage over time and examined socio-cultural challenges and opportunities. This interdisciplinary book dealt with topics related to four key levels—namely, built heritage, cultural heritage, living heritage and heritage sites.

The first half of the book addressed the difficulties of safeguarding built heritage on the one hand and of protecting the cultural heritage on the other. Architects, archaeologists and cultural tourism and museum professionals focused on the preservation of traditional buildings, housing and equipment and, in particular, their social and spatial practices. They highlighted the importance of built heritage with respect to its historical richness, architectural layouts and construction materials as well as crucially, its role in people's lives. Moreover, the contributors examined the protection of the cultural identities of communities and the specificities of their collective memory. They analysed the conditions of the past with a particular emphasis on their intangible components, with the aim of informing the present and future.

The second half of the book addressed the complications of protecting and maintaining living heritage on the one hand and of safeguarding and renovating heritage sites on the other. Architects, historians and heritage management professionals discussed the preservation of historic sites and their shapes and contents in particular. More specifically, they analysed selected sites according to socio-cultural values and memorial aspects, with an emphasis on the historical, environmental and political contexts of heritage sites and the cultural identities of their local communities.

Thus, the approach of the book did not treat architectural and urban spaces as independent from their social and cultural contexts. The contributors examined the traditional cities, traditional buildings and traditional construction materials that make up tangible heritage, while simultaneously considering the human elements that endow these sites with their intangible heritage value. This invisible value is embodied in culture, religion and communal identities as well as societal values, ways of life, local customs and social practices.

The book sought to elucidate past architectural, urban and cultural heritage in light of the present and to introduce new approaches to the safeguarding and management of heritage in the era of globalisation, as well as preventive conservation and development opportunities. Case studies were presented on heritage in the Middle East (Egypt, Iran, Oman and Syria), North Africa (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia), Eastern Europe (Bosnia and Herzegovina), South America (Chile) and Eastern Asia (Japan)—all with the objective of protecting the collective memories and cultural identities of communities.

Urban life in the twenty-first century cannot be interpreted without accounting for globalisation, as this process offers extensive opportunities for truly worldwide development. For the International Monetary Fund, 'Globalisation' is a historical process resulting from human innovation and technological progress. It refers to the increasing integration of economies around the world, particularly through trade and financial flows. The term sometimes also refers to the movement of people (labour) and knowledge (technology) across international borders.¹

¹ International Monetary Fund, 'La mondialisation: faut-il s'en réjouir ou la redouter ?', Études thématiques du FMI (Imf.org, 12 April 2000), https://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/ib/2000/fra/041200f.htm

According to Kofi A. Annan, globalisation is made possible by the progressive dismantling of commercial barriers and the mobility of capital, as well as by technological progress and the steadily decreasing costs of transportation, communications and data processing. Advantages of globalisation are manifested in sustained economic growth, elevated standards of living, increased innovation and faster diffusion of technologies and management techniques, as well as new economic perspectives for individuals and countries.²

Globalisation has broadened access to capital and technology, lowered the price of imports and enlarged export markets. However, markets do not necessarily ensure that the benefits of increased efficiency will be shared by all.³ This is important to consider because, like it or not, even today, identities are constructed in an essentially territorialised dimension.

Indeed, there are also larger cultural, political and environmental dimensions of globalisation.⁴ Populations that occupy a singular place and construct a singular world are fully integrated into a vast system.⁵ Today, despite the processes of globalisation, the 'local' still produces culture, and as such, culture remains a privileged means of affirming local identity. The architectural and urban heritage in old cities is characterised by its tangible aspects (urban networks, urban spaces and buildings). In the meantime, it acquires another intangible dimension relating to cultural and human heritage (identities, cultures, religions, values, social life, local feasts, festivals, lifestyles and spatialized practices). Therefore, heritage constitutes an inexhaustible source from which one can draw lessons concerning architectural and urban production.

The tangible and intangible parameters of heritage are composed according to society, cultural identity, daily practices, lifestyle and the physical and natural environment.

² Kofi A. Annan, 'Mondialisation et gouvernance', Rapport du millénaire du Secrétaire général des Nations Unis (Un.org, 2000), https://www.un.org/french/millenaire/ sg/report/chap2.html

³ International Monetary Fund, 2000.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Jonathan Friedman, 'Des racines et (dé)routes', *L'Homme*, 156 (2000), 187–206 (p. 200).

This book set out to analyse heritage in the context of globalisation from an interdisciplinary perspective. However, the approach of this book was not limited to the past and did not praise a particular type of architecture. Instead, it emphasised interdisciplinary approaches to the challenges faced in historic cities and aging structures. Here, contributors examined the specificities of local heritage in both past and contemporary contexts with the aim of drawing attention to human cultures and needs.

Thus, in redefining local heritage as an interdisciplinary and intercultural concept, the book assessed the conditions of the past in order to adapt them to the needs of the present and future. The contributors emphasised the existence of different cultural aspects and ways of life in various countries to ensure the maintenance of local identity and respect for the cultural needs of the local population.

In placing the 'local' at the centre of each study, to include both its tangible and intangible specificities, this book has made an important contribution to the fields of architecture and urban studies, tempting the refutation of the ideology of globalisation. The resounding message of this research, which must continue to be reinforced by scholars and practitioners alike, is that in the course of balancing the preservation of cultural identities and financial aspirations, architectures must be tailored to precise places by constructing multiple faces, as an alternative to the totalitarian features of the so-called global city.⁶

⁶ Lilia Makhloufi, 'Globalization facing identity: A human housing at stake—Case of Bab Ezzouar in Algiers,' proceeding Book of ICONARCH II, International Congress of Architecture, Innovative Approaches in Architecture and Planning (Konya: Selçuk University Faculty of Architecture, 2014), pp. 133–144 (pp. 140–41).