Review Article

Heritage as a Shape-Shifting Future-Making Tool

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Abstract

Heritage studies and the forming discourse are the focus of various transformations. These transformations can be interpreted as a paradigm shift, affecting the broadening realm of meaning and action in contemporary times. Likewise, global threats such as climate change, increasing urbanization, migration, war, energy crisis, as well as the rapidly changing social and economic conjuncture have significant effects on the understanding and interpretation of heritage. It can be argued that this situation necessitates repositioning conservation theory and practice in the context of prominent current issues and the pursuit of building a shared future.

This article aims to discuss the possibility of creating a future intertwined with the past and present, based on the metamorphosis that the field has been going through. The instrumentalization of heritage for a purposeful, systematic future-making process and its parallels with the forming principles, sustainable development in particular, constitute the main basis of this discussion.

The study traces the significant points and rising trends in the transformation of the field while identifying capacity building among the key tools within the process. The possibilities offered by innovative and interdisciplinary initiatives are also examined in the creation of an inclusive and pluralistic heritage paradigm that does not leave anyone behind.

Keywords: Heritage, Shape-Shifting, Future-Making, Capacity Building

Biçim Değiştiren Bir Gelecek İnşa Aracı Olarak Miras

Öz

Miras çalışmaları ve bu çalışmaları biçimlendiren koruma diskuru, günümüzde genişleyen anlam ve eylem sahasıyla bağlantılı şekilde, kimi zaman belirgin birer paradigma değişimi halini alan çeşitli dönüşümlerin odağı konumundadır. Aynı biçimde, iklim değişimi, artan kentleşme, göç, savaş, enerji krizi gibi küresel sorunlar ve hızla değişen sosyal ve ekonomik konjonktür, mirasın ele alınışı ve yorumlanışı üzerinde önemli etkiler yaratmaktadır. Bu durumun, koruma kuram ve pratiğinin, öne çıkan güncel meseleler ve arzu edilen ortak geleceğe ulaşma sorunsalı bağlamında yeniden konumlanmasına yönelik bir gereksinim doğurduğunu öne sürmek olanaklıdır.

Bu makale, koruma disiplininin geçirmekte olduğu başkalaşımdan hareketle, geçmiş ve günümüzle bağlantılı bir gelecek inşası düşüncesini tartışmaya açmaktadır. Amaca dönük, sistematik bir gelecek inşa sürecinde mirasın açımladığı olanaklılık ve korumanın

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bilhassa sürdürülebilir kalkınma olmak üzere gelecek biçimlendirici ilkeler ile kurduğu paralellik bu tartışmanın esas mesnetlerini oluşturmaktadır.

Alanın geçirdiği dönüşümdeki belirgin kırılma noktalarının ve öne çıkan akımların izlerini süren çalışma, aynı zamanda, kapasite geliştirme yaklaşımını bu süreçteki önemli anahtar araçlar arasına konumlamaktadır. Bu sayede, kimseyi geride bırakmayan, kapsayıcı ve çoğulcu bir miras paradigmasının yaratımında, yenilikçi ve disiplinlerarası açılımların sunduğu olanakların da irdelendiğini ifade etmek mümkündür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Miras, Biçim Değiştirme, Gelecek İnşası, Kapasite Geliştirme

1. Introduction: Shifting Paradigms in Heritage Discourse

In his 1962 book, "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions", infamous philosopher of science, Thomas Kuhn (1996, p. 121) states, "though the world does not change with a change of paradigm, the scientist afterward works in a different world". Heritage scholars must then be experiencing an endless flux, as discursive turns in the constantly evolving field of heritage studies are innumerable. Even though Logan, Kockel and Crait (2015, p. 18) assert that the massive change which has occurred over the decades has been evolutionary rather than revolutionary -since it built on the past rather than abolishing it-, the shifts and phases have been highly visible and distinct from each other.

Arguably, these shifts have become even more apparent, especially in the last few decades. One can say that a more social focus has emerged, and the fundamental approach of heritage studies has gradually become value and people-oriented over time. Well-known guiding documents like the Burra Charter (ICOMOS Australia, 1999; 2013), the Faro Convention (Council of Europe, 2005), and the works carried out by English Heritage since the early 2000s, including the "Conservation Principles, Policies, and Guidance" (2008) have placed people and the heritage values at the center of conservation.

The prominence of social dimensions in this apparent shape-shifting and interdisciplinary transcendence in conservation also presents itself in the Budapest Declaration, adopted in 2002, marking the 30th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention. In this declaration, four strategic objectives of the World Heritage Convention are declared as Credibility, Conservation, Capacity Building, and Communication (UNESCO, 2002). Five years after this milestone, the fifth C, Communities was added to the list at the 31st session of the Committee (UNESCO, 2007). Recognizably, this progress linked ensuring the effective conservation of World Heritage properties closely with humanistic aspects such as enhancing the role of communities, promoting the development of effective capacity building measures, and increasing public awareness, involvement, and support through communication.

Therefore, it is safe to say that scholars and experts are no longer dealing with only certain structures or historic environments. Dynamic constituents, including related communities, that have emerged and continue to form within a place of significance, as well as their interconnected relationships, are also integral parts of heritage and its conservation. Partly referring to Kuhn again, the work that needs to be done by the puzzle solvers just got more complex as the concept itself became a continuously reconstructed phenomenon.

On the other hand, global issues such as climate change, increasing urbanization and migration, the pandemic, the threat of war, and the energy crisis in EU make the current

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context even more difficult. These issues reveal themselves as emerging key themes and studies in the current discourse. For instance, concerning society's well-being and harmonious coexistence, the democratization of heritage, equity, and justice are amon the recurring plots of the contemporary agenda. Rights-based approaches to heritage are also closely scrutinized for all heritage sites, the World Heritage Areas in particular. The works carried out by Our Common Dignity Initiative most especially exemplify recent efforts to address the relationship between heritage and human rights while investigating key principles, challenges, and future opportunities (ICCROM, ICOMOS, and IUCN, 2017).

Likewise, sustainability-oriented heritage policies form a very large part of today's discourse. Especially in connection with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the United Nations in 2015, relevant studies have accelerated considerably. Both the social, economic and environmental opportunities offered by the effective conservation of heritage are being discussed in detail. Namely, the "Policy Document for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention" (UNESCO, 2015) and "Heritage and the Sustainable Development Goals: Policy Guidance for Heritage and Development Actors" (Labadi et al., 2021) prepared by the ICOMOS Sustainable Development Goals Working Group to provide a policy framework for all actors of the respective areas are among the first to be mentioned in this regard.

In the environmental dimension, heritage-based development is also becoming particularly important as the need for climate action arises. Environmental justice is a significant agenda in heritage studies, as it is in every contemporary equation. As a subject of utmost urgency, the impacts of climate change, along with the instrumentality of heritage in slowing down the crisis, are also under primary focus. Studies such as "The Future of Our Pasts: Engaging Cultural Heritage in Climate Action" (2019) prepared by ICOMOS Climate Change and Heritage Working Group, "Global Research and Action Agenda on Culture, Heritage, and Climate Change" (Morel et. al., 2022) and "Strengthening Cultural Heritage Resilience for Climate Change: Where the European Green Deal Meets Cultural Heritage" (European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2022) illustrate the efforts to transform heritage and the traditional knowledge it encompasses into a powerful tool to increase resilience and develop climate adaptation strategies.

In this perspective, it is possible to say that the role that heritage plays differs within the framework of these emerging tides and meta-needs. This study, therefore, aims to pinpoint the prominent features and rising trends in the shifts to discover the future-oriented possibilities offered by progressive expansions in the road of a more visionary heritage paradigm.

2. Positioning Heritage in Changing Perception

Positioning heritage within the ever-changing scene? It is another challenge of our times. As Riegl (1997, p. 69) points out in his path-breaking work published in 1903, "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Essence and Its Development", in the most original sense, monuments are built to keep particular deeds or destinies alive and present in the consciousness of future generations. They have first gained meaning as an object of reminiscing and rethinking -denkmal- or, with organic development, they have, in time, become a mnemonic for people and communities. The very idea of monumentalization has almost turned into an anchor, a pivot point, in the face of constant change and

increasing anxiety. Arguably, monuments marked the turning points of civilization and the traces of history as a symbol of power. So much so that the inventories of cultural assets have become means of remembrance that try to establish the relationship between modern society and the past (Özaslan, 2010, p. 15). Therefore, heritage as we know it, and its conservation, have been mostly understood as a modern[2] concept.

In the intervening century, the journey that started with the magnificent and grandiose solitude of monuments has expanded into historical environments, landscapes, the context that surrounds them, places, and their spirits. In this respect, the intangibility of heritage has also become a prominent part of the picture. Including elements such as customs, traditions, ceremonies, knowledge systems, and skills, the phenomenon, with a fundamental understanding, has provided a larger framework within which "tangible" heritage takes on shape and significance (Bouchenaki, 2003). Along with the exponential expansion in the categories and numbers of entities defined as heritage, a fundamental shift has also been witnessed in heritage values, and accordingly, "canon" of heritage has been replaced by a multitude of "heritages" with different representations (Harrison, 2013, p. 579-580).

Hence heritage, as a physical embodiment, is now less distinguishable from the creative universe of communities, their practices, associations, and representations. Referring to the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1959[3]), it serves as both the signifier and signified, bringing the material form and the associated meaning together. For this reason, it may easily function as a kind of rhetoric, and quite persuasively[4] support various standpoints, perspectives, and claims within many social, political, economic, and moral contexts (Samuels, 2015, p. 4).

In this new realm, scholars also offer different perspectives and understandings of the concept. For instance, the idea of the authorized heritage discourse, formulated by Laurajane Smith (2006, p. 29-34), sheds light on the naturalized or legitimized understanding of heritage while quite successfully pointing out other possibilities of interpretation. In addition to marking a shift towards a more critical approach, this conceptualization restructures heritage as values and meanings created at and around the element or the place, as well as the cultural tools that people and societies use to remember (Waterton and Smith, 2009, p. 15-16). Building on this path, Byrne (2008, p. 167-169) also portrays heritage as social action and asserts that it is deployed in social life concerning the ongoing creation of our identity. Haldrup and Bærenholdt (2015, p. 52), similarly introduce heritage as a performance that emerges out of social practices and uses, and adjunctly, meanings are practiced in processes that involve people experiencing that heritage.

As exemplified above, it can be debated that the notion of heritage made a revolutionary comeback through the above-mentioned retheorization. When discussing heritage today, there is often a primary emphasize on its place-making, culture-making, meaning-making, and community-building features. However, this understanding of "heritage in the making" opens another door of opportunity. In the simultaneous intersection of being

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[2] It must be borne in mind that many scholars argue against this idea. David Harvey, for instance, holds a significant counterargument in his well-known 2001 article, where he draws attention to the present-centered interpretation of heritage by crossing the borders of its modern construct and opening up to a discussion of its pre-modern roots.

[3] First published in 1916.

[4] This is what Samuels (2015, p. 4-8) calls "heritage as persuasion" while highlighting that heritage and its rhetoric are a strategy that can adapt to changing circumstances, illustrate transformative action and future-oriented possibilities.

and becoming, there arises the question of which direction the change should take. Because, if heritage is a process, social action, and construction, then it is also very possible to reshape it, and more importantly, reshape through it. While this proposition adds one more layer to the discussion, it also offers another use to heritage, almost anachronistically and without giving up any of its acknowledged contributions: shaping the world the way we hope to leave it to future generations.

While staying on the safer side, traces of the future-oriented positioning of heritage can also be found in current guiding documents, mostly regarding the issue of sustainable development. To set an example, the Florence Declaration (ICOMOS, 2014) suggests that "cultural landscapes should not only be interpreted as conservation areas but also as places where sustainable development strategies can be successfully applied". The Paris Declaration (ICOMOS, 2011) also identifies heritage as a driver of development while advising placing heritage at the heart of overall development strategies. Concurrently, the Kyoto Vision (UNESCO, 2012) manifests that heritage sustains and improves the quality of life of people, and only through strengthened relationships between people and heritage can the road to the "future we want" be paved.

What is commonly striking in these instances is the innovative approach to the interpretation of heritage and its instrumentalization towards the implementation of future-oriented strategies. In this light, it would be interesting for this article to further investigate the binding and constructive possibilities that heritage can offer from a future perspective.

3. Heritage and Future-Making

Future orientation, along with other related concepts, can be linked to the capabilities of people or organizations to comprehend possible future developments and the impact of both the perceived future on the existing situation and present choices on the future (Ahvenharju et al., 2018, p. 3). These capacities then form an integrated, shared capacity in a future-oriented perspective. This point of view can be adapted in culture and heritage studies, as in any other field.

Appadurai (2013, p. 179-194), for instance, emphasizes that futurity, rather than pastness, should be placed at the heart of our thinking about culture[5], in which both the ideas of the future and the past are embedded and nurtured in order to improve its relationship with development. With this framing, he also refers to what he calls "cultural capacities". It is easily possible to interpret these capacities as the capacity/capacities of heritage, given the below-mentioned explanation he offers for culture. Understanding, assessing, and developing this capacity in all its aspects naturally aligns with the use of heritage as a future-making tool. From this perspective, the heritage of yesterday, both as potential and reality, may stand here and now to build the future of tomorrow.

Even though it is a common idea to preserve cultural heritage so that future generations can experience and benefit from it in the same way, future-making through heritage may sound contradictory at first. This is, however, not necessarily true. As an integral part of the everydayness of human experience, as well as a world and meaning-making agent for individuals and communities, it stimulates various senses and emotions. Each

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[5] Here, Appadurai uses culture to cover a variety of key concepts including human creativity and values, collective identity and social organization, as well as matters of heritage, monuments, and expressions.

heritage-related experience, and the heritage itself, presents great potential that can be passed on to future generations. Whether this potential is cultural, social, economic, or environmental, it makes future-making a resourceful agenda for heritage studies. This future-oriented tendency is also in line with the close consideration of heritage with the above-mentioned (sustainable) development strategies.

As an emerging argument, the notion of conservation and heritage being a future-making process was explored by Cornelius Holtorf, who holds a UNESCO Chair on Heritage Futures at Linnaeus University. While reinterpreting conservation as a creative construction for the future, he also calls for discussions regarding how, and maybe more importantly, which heritage will be valued and help future societies solve problems to improve human lives in the face of uncontrollable realities (Holtorf, 2020, p. 284-286). These questions become particularly relevant in light of the fact that Holtorf and Högberg (2013, p. 739) define present-day heritage management as a futuristic activity. In a similar way, Harrison (2020, p. 35) argues that heritage is defined by its management practices that aim to control uncertainty and secure the existence of its components while "assembling specific future worlds". He also quite interestingly points to something he calls "a kind of pervasive ontological crisis" (Harrison 2020, p. 34):

…heritage is paralysed by the imperative to make decisions in the present that also hold open the possibilities of different futures in which those decisions may be rendered incorrect.

How to overcome this state of paralysis, at least partly, provides another significant topic of discussion. Essentially, this issue is closely related to the problem of building a future that benefits everyone equally without leaving no one behind. The need for the democratization of heritage and active agency, in this light, becomes more apparent. It is because inclusive and equitable future-making demands new perspectives on many levels. A more participatory approach to conservation is inherently one of them. Therefore, recognition and support must be given to those who embody knowledge and skills for the perpetuation of -living- heritage (ICOMOS, 2017).

When it comes to irreplaceable resources such as heritage, making the right contribution to their conservation and sustainability becomes particularly vital. By empowering communities and other related actors to become long-term guardians of their heritage, it is also possible to help them flourish, and consequenty, facilitate social change, while also ensuring effective conversation (Kyriakidis, 2020, 9-11). It is one of the reasons that places capacity building in a key position in conservation[6]. As a strategic approach enhancing autonomy and enabling individuals to realize their full potential with a people-centred perspective (Eade, 1997, 50-64), it provides a pluralistic suitability for the creation of a common future by conserving the past.

4. Capacity Building as a Promising Key Tool

Francesco Bandarin (2016, p. 342) argues that urban heritage should be considered a valuable resource for cities and their sustainable development, enabling them to respond to new challenges and social needs, and highlights the current demand for innovative methods in this regard. As the former Assistant Director-General of UNESCO for Culture suggests, the aforementioned shifts and challenges necessitate new tools to meet the requirements of contemporary conservation perspectives. While these new tools are often associated with the implementation of emerging technologies in conservation

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[6] For further reading, please see "Capacity Building, Heritage and Community Participation: Examining The Gap Between Global Approaches and Local Needs" by Okyay and Binan (2020).

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practice, the possibilities are not limited to this. For instance, heritage value assessments, mappings, impact and vulnerability assessments, and adaptation planning can be mentioned as some of the salient tools and methods.

In this respect, particular attention should also be given to capacity building, one of the strategic objectives. To understand the distinctiveness of the approach, one can first take a closer look at Amartya Sen's groundbreaking work, where he reinterprets development from a humanistic perspective. According to Sen (2004, p. 33-108), the capability of individuals can be linked to an understanding of freedom where they can achieve the state of "being what they value" and "being able to do what they value". Development, in this sense, is the elimination of deprivations because having access to fundamental resources such as quality education, health, and financial income allows individuals to find solutions to their problems and impact the world in a way that aligns with their values.

Sustaining the baseline, capacity building has essentially a more multi-faceted manner in today's understanding, given its diverse roots in many areas and disciplines[7]. Lessons learned from various endeavors, especially the institutional capacity building studies carried out by pioneering institutions such as The Community Development Resource Association (Kaplan, 1999; Kaplan, 2001), European Centre for Development Policy Management (Land et al, 2008), and United Nations Development Programme (2005; 2008), have played a significant role in shaping the contemporary conception. Consequently, the approach today envisions not only the improvement of competencies but also the enhancement of the entire context through strategic planning.

United Nations Development Programme (2009) defines capacity development[8] as a "process through which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time". Partly derived from the notion of education and training, this definition has specialized reflections within heritage studies. It is seen as a form of "people-centered change" by the World Heritage Committee that involves working with different target groups and proposing various means while framing the approach in a three-level perspective (UNESCO, 2011):

a-   *Individual Level: Strengthening the knowledge, abilities, skills, and behaviors of people with direct responsibilities*
b-   *Organisational Level: Improving institutional structures and processes through empowering key actors*
c-   *Environmental Level: Introducing a more dynamic relationship between heritage and its context*

Although principal documents (ICOMOS CIF, 1993; ICOMOS CIF, 2013; UNESCO, 2011) mostly mention particular practices such as awareness rising, effective conservation and management, communication, training and education for specific target groups and levels, it is essential to recognize that capacity building actually transcends beyond these aspects as a holistic change management tool. Depending on the context and the identified capacity needs, the improvement may include -but is not

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[7] For further reading, please see Lusthaus, Adrien and Perstinger's insightful 1999 article on the issue.

[8] The programme's definition partially separates "building" from "development" and asserts that the term "capacity building" mostly refers to the initial stages of building or creating capacities where no initial or previous accumulation exists. In the literature on heritage studies, though, the term "capacity building" is commonly preferred. Therefore, within the scope of this study, the term "capacity building" is also preferred to be used to cover all possible meanings.

limited to- fostering the communities and the relationship they establish with their heritage, and facilitating the process of becoming effective actors in conservation. However, it also addresses the society as a whole, as well as the decision-making institutions as means, and entails a social transformation by strengthening the legal, economic, and administrative framework. Accordingly, the approach can rather be described as a set of multi-level interventions that are long-term, goal-oriented, and defined within a certain systematic setup, with heritage itself being a major actor in the process (Okyay, 2022, p. 399-400).

In this understanding, the main opportunity presented by the approach lies in the transformative and empowering possibilities it holds for the heritage areas and their related communities, as it enables societies to take on responsibility for shaping the future instead of undertaking direct responsibilities for them. Additionally, as a sustainable and future-oriented mechanism, its methodology can be adapted to almost any scenario to address the current needs. Fostered by effective capacity building, the better conservation, use, expansion, mobilization, or reinterpretation of existing potentials and resources that heritage encompasses can easily lead to preferable alternatives for days to come. With a vast amount of emotional and functional benefits, multi-dimensional educational uses and trajectories, heritage can offer an inclusive higher perspective that contributes to the well-being of both itself and communities, while also helping to reach a better future for all humankind in a participatory manner.

5. Conclusion

Heritage is neither a monochronic nor linear concept. It is a continuum: it evolves, changes form and acquires different appearances as it passes through multiple meanings. Refering back to Harvey (2001, p. 320), it has always been here and produced by the contemporary concerns and experiences of people. Therefore, it has been and continues to be influenced by the context in which the process takes place, along with the everyday practices of related actors. It has been influencing these actors in return. The past, present, and future all interconnect in heritage, in its perceptions, understandings, and representations. This cumulative repertoire also reveals our place in the normative performances as human beings and formative elements of society.

In consequence of the changing conjuncture, the need for re-reading the layers of heritage rhetoric and repositioning it within the current discourse has arisen. As Winter (2014, p. 559) puts it, the rapidly shifting political and economic environments, as well as the profound transformations accompanying them, lead us to examine our perspective on heritage and the construction of its theoretical framework. Through scrutinizing its roots, conceptions and hopeful associations, new research paths and tendencies are being outlined. Arguably, current studies focus simultaneously on enhancing conservation processes through emerging tools and instrumentalizing heritage in the quest for a better future for all humankind. The multidisciplinary and innovative facets of heritage studies become more valuable in light of the new insights they offer. The multidimensional issues necessitate seminal approaches, and thus, discovering parallels and investigating intersections between current approaches are popular agendas.

From a heritage perspective, capacity building is one of these emerging key tools that has the power to create change. The idea of equipping diverse actors of heritage with the necessary knowledge and skills while simultaneously facilitating social change once again reveals how promising capacity building can be in terms of transforming our reality for the future we want. It is because the "building" in question is essentially a future-making process. In other words, the future under construction is actually a capacity to be

built that can unlock valuable potential. Therefore, it should be perceived as inherent in conservation and adopted as an integral part of management processes.

While concluding, it is worth remembering that last year, 2022, marked precisely half a century since the adoption of the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, also known as the World Heritage Convention (UNESCO, 1972). It was, and still is, one of the strongest trademarks where the idea of intergenerational responsibility is emphasized. This generation bears the responsibility to leave a livable world befitting human dignity for future generations. With the clear vision set forth by the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda, the possibility of creating alternative futures is more evident than ever before. Everyone possesses an equal right to decide about their own future, and building a common future is only possible with the contribution of everyone in line with a democratic and inclusive heritage approach. Consequently, it is cruical to reemphasize the potential contributions of capacity building through heritage, and heritage itself as a shape-shifting future-making tool, as well as the need to deepen the studies on the subject.

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