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Mehrnaz Rajabi

Climate Change, Resilience and Cultural Heritage

In-Between International
Debates and Practical
Encounters



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Foreword

Once upon a time, Historic Preservation was a matter of very traditional values, dealing with what Laurajane Smith called Authorized Heritage Discourse. Since then, many arguments have been raised to propose more timely approaches, speaking of globalization and open access to culture. But at the time being, the framework of any preservation policies had such a turnover that it required to be rethought again from scratch.

By the twenty-first century, democratization and globalization are still very important pillars of any reflection or research on cultural heritage, yet everything has been made more dramatic and felt more urgent by the new challenges, either natural or man-made.

This book focuses on climate change discourses, their developments, and their impact on Historic Preservation. If a few years ago, it was possible to deal with topics like the energy efficiency of a historical building or the service life of technological elements installed in it, as if they were just some criteria to be taken into account separately in the decision-making process, nowadays no evaluation can be carried out without a broader understanding of what new challenges encompass at global level, and how all those issues are linked to each other through the crucial crossroad of preservation of cultural heritage.

One could argue that Heritage Preservation is no longer affordable for humankind as if other issues were simply more urgent, so vital that they leave no room for other goals. Here is the critical point and a window of opportunity for the debates of this book where it is possible to show that Heritage can play a constructive role in empowering preparedness for risks as well as in building resilience for our societies: in a few words, to raise awareness and commitment for all.

That is why Mehrnaz Rajabi's research is timely and can be useful for anyone who attempts to develop a more comprehensive resilience discourse, in particular, with an international perspective, thinking not just about climate change challenges but also taking into account others which every day remind us of their urgency to be prepared for. In this regard, the author's approach underlines the need for a deeper understanding of different contexts in which preservation is implemented, avoiding

a mere mirroring of the practices and schemes coming out from general European approaches.

The last section of this book has particular merit because it explores our need for a long-term vision, that is, to deal with cultural heritage with a rational attitude, manage risks, prevent issues, and prepare responsive measures altogether. It is in line with the strategy of Preventive and Planned Conservation, which has been developed toward becoming ever more comprehensive, and through Rajabi's proposal, it is offered as a productive format to strengthen our societies' resilience attitudes.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to the Book



Abstract In the third decade of the 21st century, one of the most debatable issues that one can think of concerning any sustainability and resilience scenarios of management and development is the need to plan comprehensively feasible as much as possible, particularly when it comes to our shared global goals such as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or climate resilience. Nevertheless, such a practical concept of comprehensiveness has yet to be entertained thoroughly regarding cultural heritage and its related fields. That is the missing common ground with which the author attempts to build up this book. This chapter, as an introduction, briefly informs the readers about the author's research background behind the debates of the book, the structure of research, the scope and highlights of book chapters, and in overall, what readers should expect to gain from each chapter toward the end of the book.

In the third decade of the 21st century, one of the most debatable issues that one can think of concerning any sustainability and resilience scenarios of management and development is the need to plan comprehensively feasible as much as possible, particularly when it comes to our shared global goals such as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or climate resilience. Nevertheless, such a practical concept of comprehensiveness has yet to be entertained thoroughly regarding cultural heritage and its related fields.

Looking just at the last decade, one can find evidence of a paradigm shift that attempts to deal with similar issues; the *Post-2015 UN Agenda for Development* was restructured along a *holistic* approach, while the SDGs in the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* were defined similarly. Meanwhile, the *Paris Agreement on Climate Change*, together with companion documents like the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (Sendai Framework)* and the *New Urban Agenda (Habitat III)*, initiated a clear shift in mission to *action*, specifically within the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) field. In parallel, at the international level, one cannot help but appreciate the extraordinary efforts of UNESCO and ICOMOS to promote the systematic synergies among heritage, its protection/conservation/management, and SDGs (esp. SDG11), for instance, in UNESCO's mandates through its *Operational Guidelines*, and its strategies like the *2017 Strategy for Action on Climate Change*.

Yet, despite significant steps towards shaping a more systemic viewpoint, there are still significant gaps in the synergies between the cultural heritage field and those global challenges.

With such a panorama in mind, this book's content is based initially on analytical research on the relationship between heritage framework and contemporary challenges such as climate change, risk reduction, and mass tourism. The original research (author's Ph.D. dissertation) dealt with built cultural heritage management-related concerns and the role heritage could play in Global Goals (e.g., SDGs and climate resilience), confronting contemporary challenges. The research explored the needs and requirements for planning a contemporary heritage management system dealing with those goals and challenges more comprehensively.

The original research had a mixed type of descriptive, explanatory, and correlational methods to identify, describe, and establish new and dynamic interrelationships and systemic synergies between heritage and its related fields/concerns. It had a qualitative approach in data collection and analyzing phases regarding heritage-related concerns, and it eventually clarified the gaps and causes behind international/local difficulties in having a stable strategy for the contemporary heritage management system. Furthermore, it employed a holistic, systemic perspective in which different directions and points of view toward cultural heritage protection, conservation, and valorization have been analyzed in different scales of interrelationships and among disciplinary systems. Thus, it investigated the effect of one system on the other and vice versa by detecting the gaps and then looked critically into the recommendatory encounters to reveal the nature of reactions necessary for the future integration of each pair of frameworks.

Content-wise, while the research originally explored five frameworks of sustainability, resilience, climate change, tourism, and management of the heritage framework, this book consists of an intense short version of only the climate change and resilience thinking frameworks in relation to historic preservation. The author handpicked a few significant thematic topics of each of the two, and depicted even more selective gaps and practical reflections, deliberately for the sake of effectively raising awareness of not only the gravity of missing points and interrelationships among issues in hand but also of the windows of opportunities for managing and navigating such complex topics.

Accordingly, this book showcases the cross-disciplinary and *systemic* relationships among climate change, resilience, and cultural heritage. It critically reviews the contemporary international documents and scholarly debates of climate science, disaster risk management, and heritage fields and reveals that, within the comprehensive point of view, the potential and advances in one field could be instrumentalized in other fields. Moreover, it provides tailor-made considerations and practical recommendatory encounters toward resilient cultural heritage in facing climate change as a *disaster risk driver*. Ultimately, the book highlights the significance of the cultural dimension of climate change as well as the global landscape of systemic risk while redefining a new comprehensive and holistic definition of resilience for the heritage field.

The following chapters (Chaps. 2–6) are organized thematically to allow readers to enjoy the gradual growth of debates toward conclusion and autonomously inform them in the most efficient synthetical way possible for each theme in such a brief book. Consequently, chapter seven is dedicated to final remarks and open reflections toward a more holistic resilience thinking for cultural heritage.

Chapter two explores cultural heritage's complex interrelationship with climate change, retracing such synergies within significant international documents, roadmaps, and scholarly debates at the international level. It informs the readers about climate change, its challenges, and its effects on cultural heritage, considering climate science and heritage fields. The chapter argues for a possible role of heritage in response to climate change. In specific, it critically reviews significant existing international policy documents such as the 2015 *UN Paris Agreement*, the 2017 *UNESCO Strategy for Action on Climate Change (SACC)*, the 2019 *European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage (EFACH)*, and the 2020 *ICOMOS Resolution 20GA/15-Cultural Heritage and the Climate Emergency* by which it provides us a better understanding of the matter in hand while reflecting on constructive ways to shift our shared mission to action by looking into a few transformative initiatives.

Chapter three goes a step further, starting from UNESCO and ICOMOS at the international level and arriving at Europe, it provides readers with a clearer image of the binary between climate change debates in the heritage framework and heritage debates in the climate change framework. Moreover, exploring more profoundly the lack of a comprehensive vision of climate and environmental change-related issues regarding cultural heritage, this chapter investigates four categories of institutional/organizational/managerial, technical/technological, socio-cultural, and financial gaps. Nevertheless, reflecting on those gaps, the last section of this chapter explores a few constructive recommendatory encounters by which the attempt is to build a set of reflections on the ways of integrating heritage into climate change policy frameworks while minding the incorporation of climate change challenges in heritage policies and strategies at all levels, from strengthening the connection between heritage and climate science to practical recommendations for bridging its associated limits in policies and practices.

On the other hand, chapter four focuses on cultural heritage and climate change impact by investigating yet another set of meaningful gaps that hide failures and opportunities to achieve success in tackling the impact of climate change on cultural heritage on diverse scales. Like the previous chapter, it tracks the gaps in four categories. However, more predominantly, significant institutional/organizational/managerial and technical gaps are under investigation, concentrating on the climate change debates in the heritage framework. In particular, this chapter delves into the notion of adaptation to climate change, looking into the typologies of its opportunities, constraints, and limits. At the same time, the section dedicated to practical considerations informs us about the way to move forward, from strengthening systemic, swifter, and faster adaptation actions to improving scientific and