THE CHANGING ROLE OF URBAN HERITAGE AS DEFINED BY STAKEHOLDER ATTITUDES

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Abstract

This paper attempts to demonstrate the relationship between the changing role of urban cultural heritage and the attitudes held toward heritage by relevant stakeholders. The proposed framework is explored particularly through cities in Turkey, which the author has studied as part of her doctoral dissertation on 'Urban Conservation Projects and Governance', and cities in Abu Dhabi emirate, of the United Arab Emirates, where she has been working in the local heritage authority for several years. A comparative analysis is made to capture any enduring patterns shared across the different countries, and any specific situations particular to each. In an increasingly globalizing world and professional network, such comparisons can help to identify the scope of possible cross-pollination between the various cultural contexts of planning practice.

The conducted research and practical experience mentioned above suggest that the role which the urban heritage can assume within the planning, development and public life of cities is closely contingent on the attitudes held toward heritage by stakeholders involved in the preservation process, as well as the roles that these stakeholders play in the process. The degree to which the urban cultural heritage can effectively play a 'productive' role in the life of the city, or to which the preservation of its authenticity can be sustained in the face of development pressures and contemporary societal needs, are determined by the outcome of confrontations and negotiations among various stakeholders, each with their own particular interests and capacities. Some salient examples of factors affecting these negotiations are the maturity of public institutions and legislation, the awareness of and priority attributed by local governments to cultural heritage in their policies, the economic tools available to property owners and users to realize the economic potential of heritage assets, the lobbying capabilities of specialized civil society and community groups, and the level of involvement of experts and academics in actual urban conservation projects and processes.

Introduction

The **concept of 'heritage conservation'** has been constantly evolving since the birth of this modern notion in the 19th century. Around the middle of the 20th century, heritage began to be understood in an urbanistic sense and to feature in planning discourse, transcending the curatorial framework of single monuments and museums. This still remains an important and relevant conceptual milestone, as its implications

continue to be addressed today. The conflicts between the 'philosophical' aspects of urban heritage, related to the importance of heritage as a source of cultural identity, and the 'practical aspects', related to the realities of real estate economics, have as yet not been fully resolved. International principles and professional standards of heritage conservation have spread around the world, but their interpretation in each **cultural context** and the levels of practice that are attained still differ from country to country. This is both a challenge in terms of safeguarding the values that heritage presents, and an opportunity in terms of the multiple alternatives for preservation approaches offered by the diversity of the world's cultures. The understanding of how approaches can be customized also averts the dangers of importing foreign models to places far from their original source without regard for particular needs of local contexts.

Many of the underlying dynamics determining the level of understanding of, and thus the role attributed to heritage in the life of today's cities, are cultural, which implies they are contingent on the **value systems**, attitudes and behaviors of the **stakeholders** taking part in the urban discourse. This idea has been explored here within two cultural contexts, those of Turkey and the United Arab Emirates, where the author had a chance to observe these dynamics in action. In **Turkey**, these observations are based on the author's previous professional experience since 1998 and particularly on her doctoral dissertation on 'Urban Conservation Projects and Governance' completed in 2011, and in the **UAE**, on the author's experience in the heritage protection authority of Abu Dhabi Emirate since 2008. In both contexts, it has been possible to observe **certain recurring patterns** and also an **evolution** in the perceptions and roles of stakeholders regarding the urban heritage, albeit set in different social and political circumstances.

Evolving role of urban heritage

The **new understanding of heritage as an urbanistic force** that has a symbiotic relationship with development has been advocated by various researchers in the field, and increasingly gaining recognition in related industries. Some notable examples of this are seen in publications of the Getty Conservation Institute (2011) exploring 'Historic Cities', the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (2011) dedicated to 'Heritage', and the Scientific Symposium of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) themed 'Heritage as a Driver of Development' (2011). As highlighted in these publications, the notion of the built heritage now gathers cultural values and meanings in a broader context, and the 'need for heritage' is a signal of human societies trying to find themselves in a world dislocating under the effects of globalization. Heritage can move from a passive and aesthetic component, to a more active and assertive one, proposing visions and strategies for future development that combine conservation and 'modernity', providing lessons in reaching a more balanced, sustainable form of development that offers more cohesive social relationships, more human scales and more successful adaptation to the physical environment as demonstrated by vernacular buildings that use local materials and

techniques. Long considered a factor of additional cost, heritage is increasingly considered as a resource supporting economic development and social welfare. Investment in heritage produces attractive returns and positive impacts on land value, though methods to evaluate this are often still commercial and short-term-oriented. Cultural tourism can also be a form of sustainable development, as it is integrated within the local socio-economic context and cultural identity. Concepts and methods for the management of historic cities can make essential contributions to urban planning, as the analytical appreciation of the historic city reveals a repository of ideas that can provide continuity in city building. All these opportunities require a change of attitude, where we must question our expectations of buildings, and accept to modify our usage according to local environmental constraints (ICOMOS, 2011, pp. 9-11; Siravo, 2011, pp. 4-5).

A focused look at the **economic benefits of heritage conservation** is deserved, in light of its impact on shaping the role of urban heritage. Preservationists are increasingly being joined by other industries' professionals in defending that there is a strong economic case for regenerating historic buildings. Important historic buildings that may have been perceived as redundant for contemporary needs are often transformed, through adaptive reuse schemes, to a host of surprising uses that become very successful due to their unique character (Allies and Morrison & M&N, 2011). The inclusion of heritage assets in regeneration schemes provides a focus and catalyst for sustainable change. The impact of successful schemes is felt beyond the boundaries of the heritage asset itself and can boost the economy of the whole town. Historic buildings give a sense of place and a focal point that the community will rally around to support. The fabric and design can add a distinctive identity to the 'new build' part of a regeneration scheme, lifting the overall quality of the built environment. They may have interesting historical or cultural associations that can be developed through the wider regeneration area, and attract occupiers who would not be interested in a less distinctive building (Drivers Jonas, 2011, pp. 2-3). Economic benefits are further listed as increased and stabilized property values, which translate into increased property tax revenues; cultural tourism, which translates into increased jobs and increased sales tax revenues; and the building of strong communities and distinctive places where populations wish to live and work. Just the act of restoring one building can encourage others to do the same and improve the value of the entire block. Successful preservation programs foster community pride, learning, and creativity, which are critical to an educated workforce, as a strong economy and a strong community are inextricably linked (Anon, 2012).

The identification of heritage as catalyzing economic development is only just beginning to be supported by **robust and credible analyses**, through hard economic measurements, qualitative or environmental indicators (Rypkema & Cheong, 2011a). These measurements help to address not just the environmental but also the social and economic contibutions of heritage conservation to sustainable development, such as embodied energy, reduced infrastructure expenditure and reduced carbon footprint, and other energy savings of reusing existing built resources. Heritage

conservation may be, in fact, the single development strategy that simultaneously advances all aspects of sustainability (Rypkema & Cheong, 2011b).

The economic and social contributions of heritage to urban development are demonstrated to be possible, but depend on certain **conditions** being in place. Some schemes fail to deliver expected results, due to factors such as unforeseen costs, a beneficial use not being found for buildings, or visitor attractions failing to attract sufficient public interest. Working with heritage assets brings to the development process a special set of conservation, planning, funding and construction considerations, which often **require** specialist knowledge (Drivers Jonas, 2011, pp. 2-3). The special requirements are further elaborated in a study to assess the outcomes of the Townscape Heritage Initiative set up by the UK Heritage Lottery Fund, which identifies the importance of local knowledge, local capacity, appropriateness of scale, a permanent and stable local population, the presence of community groups, some local money existing in place, appropriate levels of housing market and demand, and a reasonable difference between the rehabilitation costs and the resulting property values of buildings (Shipley & Reeve, 2011). From a broader perspective, the sustainability of urban heritage preservation is contingent on its being part of a larger rehabilitation process that also addresses the issue of turning areas that contain the heritage into fully functional and developed portions of the city (Rojas, 2011, pp. 11-12), and integrated into the economic system of cities.

While it is critical to strengthen the **quantifiable aspect** of the economic role of heritage, this by no means means that **qualitative evaluations** are no longer as relevant or valid. On the contrary, these two aspects are mutually reinforcing, and integral to a full understanding of development. The **term 'development'** is defined in the UNESCO Declaration of Cultural Diversity, not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence (ICOMOS, 2011, p. 9). As the concept gains new dimensions, the diversity of the types of values also increases, and more stakeholders become involved in the debate.

Stakeholder attitudes and roles

As our societies are becoming increasingly globalized due to advances in communication and mobility, global market economies fostering new trade and consumption patterns, and the spread of participatory democracies, so the policies of government intervention in the fields of planning and preservation are undergoing paradigm shifts. There is a new emphasis on **values-based conservation**, where the assessment of significance for heritage is made on a premise of the subjectivity of values, and the authority of expertise is questioned or tempered with a diversity of social narratives. This has the potential for a more holistic approach to conservation, integrating independent professional spheres with each other and with society at large, and broadening the audience for heritage. As such, cultural heritage acts as a medium of evolving social values, and its conservation can help manage rapid social

changes and mitigate their negative effects (Avrami et al, 2000, pp. 3-4). Conservation is thus required to engage more actively in cultural politics, to assess social and economic, or use and non-use values together, and to quantify the qualitative aspects of 'cultural capital' (Throsby, 2002, p. 103).

Upon examining the various types of values and their championing stakeholders, ones sees a basic pattern of **duality** manifested in different forms, such as scientific expertise versus social inclusivity, public benefit versus private rights, state intervention versus market forces, or indeed, conservation versus development. Expressed in another way, sociocultural values mobilize the cultural elite, philanthropists and community leaders, while the economic values attract consumers and real estate investors. Another pattern commonly mentioned is the shifting of values, e.g. how heritage is often perceived as a barrier to regeneration that too complicated to work with, or a symbol of decline and social deprivation, but how it is finally being recognized for its true range of cultural, social and economic values. For sustainable preservation programs, one needs to put all values embedded in urban heritage into play, as they are the drivers that mobilize a diverse set of stakeholders; the wider the variety of values, the better heritage can draw the support, financing and skills of diverse and capable stakeholders (Drivers Jonas, 2011, p. 2-3; Rojas, 2011, p. 11).

The **reconciliation of this duality** remains at the center of the debate regarding the role of values-based conservation and governance. Making heritage more accessible on a wider social level will also enable its acceptance as a valid option for the general public, politicians, decision-makers, contractors, developers and others. For this, an effort on both sides is needed, through bringing a more urbanistic approach to the heritage conservation agenda, while also improving the position of heritage values with the planning agenda. These can then be transformed from competing alternatives to mutually beneficial components of the same joint agenda (Yildirim, 2011, p. 28). Highlighting the social relevance of this proposition, Siravo (2011, p. 9) points out that conservation represents a minority position, but it is all the more relevant in times of environmental concern, and as it offers to overcome the divide between a powerful minority who are partisans of unrestrained destructive growth and a powerless minority who champion total conservation, to show how development can be channeled in the **interest of a vast majority of users**.

At this point, the question of whether or not the urban cultural heritage can effectively **play a 'productive' role** in the life of the city can be addressed in terms of reconciling the dualities related to value-based conservation through negotiations among stakeholders. A perhaps brutally simplistic assumption would place the answer given by the proponents of economic development as 'yes', while that given by the heritage conservation sector as 'no', with the former garnering larger support in society. However, a more consensual solution can be facilitated as more diverse types of 'value' (i.e. inherent, non-use values as opposed to use values measured strictly in terms of monetary profits) are adopted by members of industries such as real estate, economics and engineering, who are classically trained to undertake cost-

benefit analyses within purely financial parameters. The **definition of 'productivity'** in turn can be expanded to allow for new ways of measurement beyond the financial and quantitative.

Similarly for the question of whether promoting heritage as a driver of development inevitably leads to **gentrification**, a more predominant and immediate response would be 'yes', based on the premise that conserved and regenerated historic areas inevitably experience increase in their property value, which entails replacement of lower-income groups with higher-income ones. However, there are several points that show there is more complexity to this question. Gentrification can be considered part of the natural evolution and cycles of invasion and succession in places, where low-income populations are often themselves inheritors of their neighborhoods from earlier, wealthier occupants. Social change needs to take place, but the question can be modified to pursue its rate and manner, rather than its existence. Change can be softened, e.g. by reducing displacement, if not completely preventing it, through social housing policies that local governments adopt, such as subsidies and rent control. To give two examples to the risks of extreme approaches on both ends, full retention of low-income residents can lead to disrepair, as they cannot afford the maintenance costs of buildings, while full displacement of the resident population can cause mayors to lose their electorate and long-time partner in urban conservation efforts, as the new rich who move in can be unappreciative of the earlier efforts, in turn causing the disruption of projects (Getty Conservation Institute, 2011, pp. 19-22).

Further to the broad themes mentioned above, some **more specific factors related to stakeholders** can be acknowledged as influencing the role of heritage within urban development. The various social and economic characteristics of stakeholders that constitute important factors include the demographic profiles and the income levels of the communities residing in historic areas, the level of conservation culture that is internalized by these communities, the strength of the connection between users and the buildings they use, the approach of the local government toward heritage and the skills at managing funds for its conservation. The maturity of public institutions and legislation determines the level that economic incentives and aid can be offered to owners and users, conservation works on buildings can be facilitated, local governments are empowered to support owners and users, and how effective regulating mechanisms are.

To be elaborating on arguably the most important stakeholder in the debate, **local governments** are the only actors capable of ensuring coordination of other stakeholders, through a combination of legal enforcement powers, economic tools and social engagement and outreach abilities. They are increasingly required by communities to take responsibility for preserving the public-good component and the socio-cultural values of urban heritage (Rojas, 2011, p. 12). Economic tools made available to property owners and users to realize the economic potential of heritage assets, become more potent when local governments can channel the use of funds in a way that maximises the multiplier effect of incentives, e.g. by providing seed

money for privately owned buildings conditional to match funding. As another key tool at the hands of local governments, participatory governance has the potential to impact on historic environments through the devolution of land use planning and development control to local authorities. While this presents an opportunity to mediate between the competing interests of conservation and development, tensions also arise between localized decision-making, and national policy and international obligations to protect heritage (Landorf, 2011). To competently handle these sensitive dynamics, it is important to have good technical staff with heritage expertise in local authorities, consisting of well educated professionals of architecture and planning-related fields, as well as financial and real estate advisers (Getty Conservation Institute, 2011, pp. 19-22).

Beside individual characteristics of local governments and other stakeholders, the **methods of organization** between them present another essential factor in supporting the role of urban heritage. In the multi-actor settings that undeniably form the only viable governance system today, effective coordination and collaboration between all stakeholders that share responsibility, the ability for key actors to find enlightened partners with whom they can work together, and the presence of a stakeholder that assumes ownership of urban conservation projects and fosters the spirit and culture of collaboration are some of the basic requisites for the success of urban heritage conservation. Similar tenets have been outlined in the literature of site management for historic places. The principles adopted by UNESCO for managing World Heritage Sites, as explained by Feilden and Jokilehto (1993), include the conservation of all values present on the site, consultation with all stakeholders, regular monitoring and reporting done by appropriate experts, and periodic work programs and priorities defined within the strategic conservation plan framework.

The Turkish Context

Situated in a historical crossroads of civilizations, Turkey is home to a rich stock of built heritage, which endows almost every town with historic quarters to be protected. Legal and administrative systems to address the conservation of this legacy have been in development since the 19th century, and have generally followed worldwide trends in the field. However, the size of the population and the socio-economic and geographical dynamics of the country have rendered conservation a constant challenge. Influx of rural migrants into urban areas to form the new industrial workforce, in particular have made populist policies in local governments prevail at the expense of adequate protection of the urban heritage.

Traditionally, the conservation mandate has been burdened on the government and not fully integrated into the economic life of cities. In the face of the threats posed by these trends, conservation efforts have been undertaken with legislation that was strict, but weakly enforced and ill-equipped with implementation tools, and a centralized administrative structure, comprising the Cultural Ministry and its provincial branches, that had only meagre state resources at hand; these factors

confined conservation to the level of a bureaucratic and academic exercise that was marginalized from political decision-making processes, and not taken root as a community-wide culture. This 'top-down' approach can be understood in the context of the state-interventionist regime that was prevalent until the 1990s, but which has now given way to trends brought about by the evolving democracy of Turkey (Yıldırım 2009b).

Reflecting the wider trends discussed in the previous section, there have been important **new developments** over the last few years in the legislation regarding cultural heritage. Many are related to the accession for European Union membership and EU-compliance reform, entailing the devolution of government power and localization of preservation services, whereby increased roles, responsibilities and funding resources are given to local authorities, as well as incentives to private persons and bodies for cultural and natural heritage protection.

Since 2003, about ten **new laws and associated regulations** have been adopted, which have direct and indirect implications for historic preservation. These include new funding sources and responsibilities given to special provincial directorates and municipalities; the establishment of municipal Conservation Implementation and Regulation Bureaus (KUDEB) and provincial project and training bureaus, the streamlining of bureaucratic procedures; new tools for compensation of historic property owners such as transfer of development rights, and an expanded scope for urban regeneration and tourism-related investments. These changes, while deemed a remarkable legislative and administrative reform, have been received with some skepticism in terms of their effectiveness and consequences, which are yet to be fully realized.

This legislative reform coincides with **socio-economic trends,** such as an increased general interest in heritage preservation, fed by media coverage and the new awareness of economic value to be gained through cultural tourism, especially by local governments; a shift away from centralized, modernist planning toward strategic planning and the emergence of site management plans, particularly in the context of World Heritage Sites; the adoption of the new concepts of sustainability, livability, devolution and governance covered within the UN-based Local Agenda 21; increasing international sponsorship through programs of the European Union and funding bodies such as the World Monuments Fund and the World Bank; the increased interest of private companies in tourism investments in archaeological sites; and the strengthening of non-governmental organizations, including citizen groups and professional chambers. While these trends present opportunities supporting heritage conservation, they are accompanied by controversial project investments of international corporate capital in prime urban locations in Turkey, which draw the reactions from community groups through court battles and protest campaigns.

This all helps to produce an **increased number of actors** in the preservation sphere, coming together both in terms of their conflicting interests, such as in preservation battles, and in terms of collaborations, in terms of both international and public – private partnerships. In this new era of democratization, two important implications emerge that need to be monitored and managed for positive outcomes. Firstly, the relaxation of centralized government control will give way to more varied and contested views of preservation and to less strict applications of preservation principles. Secondly, the view of preservation as an economic revenue generator presents intensive initiatives for projects to preserve and reuse historic fabric on one hand, and potential abuse through misguided interventions on the other. In other words, it is possible to foresee a **quantitative rise and qualitative fall in** urban conservation projects and practices.

In response to these challenges and opportunities, some **basic measures** can be proposed, including staff and technical assistance to the highly underserved local authorities to provide guidance in interventions; the community sector to rise to the challenge of checking speculative interests in the private and government sectors empowered by the new laws; incentivizing good practices among private sector investors; and forming the 'right' type of partnerships in conservation projects that will achieve optimal results (Yildirim, 2011, p. 32-36).

Empirical research conducted during the author's recent **doctoral dissertation**, which explores the governance framework of actors in the urban conservation process, has provided some insights that elaborate on the propositions outlined above. The main **hypothesis** of the dissertation, explored through numerous case studies, states that 'for a successful project, the governance framework must include the active participation of four types of actors, i.e. Statutory Authorities, Investors, Users and Experts, to fulfill the respective requirements of legal, financial, social and scientific credibility of projects, as well as a fifth actor who will be the Project Owner. The focus case studies of the study have been the cities of Gaziantep, Kuşadası and Mudurnu, as well as about forty other towns of large, medium and small scale.

In the metropolitan municipality of **Gaziantep**, the 'Culture Trail Project', which is part of a wider initiative called 'Gaziantep: The City that Turns its Assets into Abundance', features a 5.5 km axis connecting the citadel with the historical commercial center, where street and building façade rehabilitation, infrastructure and landscape improvements, and restorations and adaptive reuse of historic buildings have been carrid out, aimed at revitalizing the historic center and integrating it into the social life of the city. Here, the urban heritage is clearly seen as a vital component of the vision for the city's future. The project has been initiated with the election of a new mayor with such a vision, and successfully implemented though strong municipal leadership and coordination, which revolves around the multi-actor 'Common Mind Platform'.

In the mid-sized tourist resort town **of Kuşadası,** the **'**Kaleiçi Quarter Street Rehabilitations Project', which is part of a wider initiative called 'Kuşadası Reclaims

its Natural and Cultural Identity', features street and building façade rehabilitation, infrastructure and landscape improvements. Kuşadası Municipality has formed a strong partnership with the Foundation for the Protection and Promotion of the Environment and Cultural Heritage (ÇEKÜL) and various universities' architectural faculties for the project.

In the small Silk Road town of **Mudurnu**, the 'Project for Tourism-based Revitalization of Traditional Architecture' involves efforts to revitalize the economy through cultural tourism, after the collapse of the poultry industry in the economic recession of 2001, through minor and comprehensive repairs in historic buildings, adaptive reuse for tourism, and visual improvements in the public realm. The special success of the Municipality, in coordination with the Provincial Directorate for Culture and Tourism, has been mobilizing funds provided by the new grant scheme of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, for the design and execution of thirty restoration projects.

The examined projects have revealed some **successful outcomes,** such as transformation of the project areas- most of which had less development dynamics compared to the rest of the city- into more attractive destinations through physical improvement and increase in use and economic activity; enhancement of the city's identity; emergence of social and economic expectations from the local government and community toward the urban heritage; setting an example and providing impetus for other projects; actors sharing ownership of project, and development of a local preservation culture. Some **points of concern** also emerge, mostly related to interventions being superficial and lacking full technical and scientific competence. However, a general attitude full of optimism and a resolution to continue works is observed, as well as a tendency of implementation improving in quality, as lessons are drawn from mistakes in earlier phases of projects.

Some important points observed regarding the **processes** of projects are that partnerships are based on ease of implementation (e.g commercial districts being favored in initial phases over residential, as project co-funding by local traders is available), and a notable element of public participation, through information and consultation meetings with business owners, and multi-actor committees set up either for the specific project or operating city-wide.

The main stakeholders of urban conservation projects**,** in order of importance, emerge as Municipalities, with particular importance of individual mayors, Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Boards, and Governorships. projects. The role of Project Owner is played mostly by the metropolitan or district municipality, supported by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Directorate of Foundations. A wide range of actors act as project partners, including the Directorate of Surveying and Monuments within the Ministry, the ÇEKÜL Foundation and its local branches, the Association of Historic Towns (TKB), the Chamber of Architects, private architectural practices. Project funding comes mainly from Municipalities, grants distributed by the Special Provincial Administrations based on the new real

estate tax co-payment scheme, international funding bodies and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

The case study findings suggest that the positive processes and outcomes of the examined projects are supported by the presence of the types of actors outlined in the main hypothesis, thus largely supporting the hypothesis (Yildirim, 2011, p. 322).

The key issue that needs to be addressed for success appears as maintaining the productive momentum of projects without compromising on scientific standards. From the governance perspective, this entails the **balance** between the 'Regulating' role of the 'Experts' and 'Users' and the 'Executive' role of the 'Investors' and 'Statutory Authorities'. To achieve this, an effective system of **coordination** and collaboration between these parties is required, harnessing as many channels of communication as possible. Other factors to consider include actors being involved in full capacity, whereby mandatory roles defined by legislation are supported by voluntary roles; technical capacity building for municipal staff through support from experts; project continuity being achieved, on a technical level by involvement of dedicated experts throughout design and implementation, and on an institutional level through long-term, lasting governance structures independent of electoral politics, being put in place. These measures also help to awareness for and reinforce the culture of preservation in the community.

As a concluding remark on these developments in urban conservation and their effect on the role of urban heritage in Turkey, one can note a **positive change** toward more social engagement, more opportunities to realize the economic potential, and heritage becoming a more visible component of the city image and the strategic visions for the cities' futures. For plans and projects that could not find the funds to be implemented before, the 'opportunity to implement' has arrived, being realized with varying degrees of success and competence, but nevertheless with great enthusiasm and a positive trajectory of improvement.

The Emirati Context

The urban heritage of the United Arab Emirates has been marked by the astoundingly **rapid transformation** of the country through its oil wealth, from a confederation of semi-nomadic tribes surviving on a basic subsistence economy into a futuristic post-modern landscape. The distinction of the post-Oil UAE from the pre-Oil period is clearly marked by the country's social and physical characteristics, but a continuum of **layers of urban growth** has still managed to form in this transition. Beside the survival of a short but vital urban layer attesting to the history of modernization, Emirati cultural heritage can be gleaned through traditions linked with a strong adherence to Islamic practices, enduring references to a nomadic, desert-bound lifestyle, and intangible heritage elements such as poetry, camel-herding and falconry. There are also important archaeological remains and ancient oases dating back to the Bronze and Iron Ages, which together form a cultural

landscape that have evolved and survived to the present day. The rapid development of the 20th century have caused major loss of the pre-Oil urban fabric, leaving behind only the monumental structures such as Qasr al Hosn in Abu Dhabi, and some traces of villages that can be found at the edges of oases in Al Ain. Although the heritage is not as strong in the built, urban sense, the intangible and rural elements find their references in the modern urban landscape, producing an unusual mixture of urban heritage. The country owes its modern-day achievements to the masses of expatriate workers and professionals taking up residence here, forming a highly multi-cultural population that has indirectly contributed to the urban culture.

The UAE is essentially a monarchy in terms of political regime, but it has some distinctive features that suggests a more democratic **governance structure** than one might presume. Firstly, the country is a federation of separate emirates, each with a certain amount of autonomy that includes a strong local mandate for culture; secondly, the **tribal governance** structure centered around the 'majlis' tradition of consultation enables a considerable degree of upward feedback of the communities' interests to the well-respected rulers to consider. With the advent of civic institutions, the government has adopted modern state organs such as the Federal National Council, but these have been superimposed on, coexisting with, and thus affected by local tribal structures. The urban development projects, which began with the flow of funds from oil exports in the 1960's, were initially directed from the Rulers' courts, but soon the realization of development plans required the establishment of government departments for specialized operations, which eventually led to the creation of federal ministries after unification as a nation-state in 1971. Today, local governments have a very high profile in the development of the physical world (Damluji, 2006, pp. 16, 36). Development budgets and projects are allocated by the Executive Councils representing the government of each emirate (Damluji, 2006).

More specifically for **heritage**, the development of **stakeholders** and activities can be traced back to archaeological excavations in the mid-20th century which started under the auspices of the late president Sheikh Zayed, and the establishment of the Center of Documentation and Research to record the emirate's history and resolve territorial issues. This was followed by the Department of Antiquities and the Al Ain Economic Development and Tourism Promotion Authority, which asked for UNESCO's support in preparing the Abu Dhabi Cultural Heritage Management Strategy. Completed in 2005, the Strategy promoted an integrated approach to the management of the emirate's cultural heritage, and recommended the establishment of the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH) to implement this vision. The founding Law no. 28 of 2005 charged ADACH with a broad mandate for this end, and placed it among several new Abu Dhabi government agencies that have been expected to guide Abu Dhabi's ambitious future development (Yıldırım & El Masri, 2010). These agencies include the Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council (UPC), Department of Municipal Affairs overseeing Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Western Region Municipalities, the Department of Transport (DoT) and the Environment Agency. In 2011, ADACH was integrated with the Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority (ADTA), to form the Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority (TCA), this restructuring being

viewed by some as an indicator of a shift in the emirate government's policy toward engaging culture and heritage more actively in economic development.

The Abu Dhabi government has been showing strong initiative also in adopting the **Abu Dhabi 2030 Policy Agenda**, in development since the mid-2000s. Cultural heritage has been given an important role at policy level, as one of the main subject areas in the agenda; however, the level of implementation has revealed challenges, as it is often not clear how conflicts arising between the mandates of different agencies will be resolved and how the **government's priorities will be negotiated**. A recent example of this has been the Abu Dhabi Bus Station, an urban landmark of modern architectural heritage, which has been designated for protection by ADACH/ TCA but also scheduled for replacement with a new facility as part of the bus transportation development plans of the DoT. Negotiations between the two agencies are currently ongoing, and have recently taken a turn on the side of preservation, as the matter has been raised to the level of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council, and various briefings on the significance of the station have helped key officials re-consider the redevelopment scheme.

The policy agenda has been followed by sectoral versions, foremost among them the Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030, as well as the upcoming **Environment 2030** sustainability agenda. It has not been clearly defined how cultural heritage features within this agenda, i.e. in terms of the social, environmental and economic pillars of sustainability, but this may be a point that will be addressed among the agencies in future deliberations, as the EAD and former ADACH have many procedural and practical relations in effect.

The **emirate government's** predominant role also manifests itself as the primary **funding source** for both development and heritage conservation projects; the government's decision to cut the budgets of many agencies, which has been interpreted as a strategic move in the wake of the 2008 economic recession, has affected the heritage conservation work at TCA.

On a level below the emirate government, **municipalities** have exercised their **regulatory** capacity in a way that has shaped the formation of new urban layers. During the 1980s, bye-laws of the Department of Town Planning have required new buildings, particularly residential ones, to feature architectural elements of 'Arab/ Islamic' style on their elevations. Intended to reflect regionalism, the effect of this has been criticized by scholars to produce instead only superficial decorative features, often without consideration for the underlying principles of Islamic architecture (Damluji, 2006, p. 32).

Similarly, the misappropriation and literal application of features of traditional architecture such as wind towers and desert forts, have produced unintended consequences, misrepresenting the identity of the built heritage (Allies and Morrison & M&N, 2011). Here, the quality and role of design professionals becomes key as they **interpret and reproduce the regional cultural identity**. Damluji (2006)

provides some insights into this, such as the conventional architectural education in the region having been oriented towards structural engineering (p. 36), and the influx into the region of architects from different backgrounds and sense of aesthetics resulting in the experimental nature of the architectural profession (pp. 24 , 102-116). More recently, professionals recruited to the new public and private sector agencies are advocating context-sensitive design as the global best practice, instead of the conventional, narrower focus on operational and 'engineering' aspects of urban projects. This is a salient instance of the multi-cultural character of the stakeholder ecosystem in Abu Dhabi at work.

There are some examples of **architectural modernism** in Abu Dhabi, from the 1960s-80s, that has provided an appropriate response to local cultural and climatic conditions (Damluji, 2006). It is important to recognize this layer as part of the urban heritage, to complement and provide continuity to the more 'ancient', pre-Oil era sites and buildings, which are more readily recognized as 'heritage'. The scope for **adaptive reuse** of both types of heritage is as yet somewhat limited, due to factors such as the fragile physical nature of pre-Oil buildings and the substandard physical construction techniques of some early modern period buildings, not to mention the absence of a sufficient culture and industry supporting the idea. However, as more value is placed by the government, developers and the local community on the full range of heritage assets, it will be easier to develop methods of regenerating and integrating them within urban development.

Many illustrative issues related to stakeholders and the role of urban heritage can be observed in **Al Ain**. Considered the most 'authentic city' within the emirate, the modern city of Al Ain has developed in juxtaposition with an ancient oasis landscape, which was inscribed oas aUNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) as the serial property of 'The Cultural Sites of Al Ain'. Al Ain Oasis, one of the components of the property, has been the subject of TCA's Al Ain Oasis Cultural Quarter Master Plan, aimed to connect the historic oasis with the surrounding urban fabric, and conserve it as a local environmental resource (Yıldırım & El Masri, 2010). The master planning efforts and the WHS nomination process have together been advanced through productive inter-agency coordination between TCA, UPC and Al Ain Municipality (AAM), to integrate the oasis master plan with the wider local plan, and to ensure coordination of the development control processes of each agency in and around the WHS areas. The AAM has supported some development restrictions by exercising the basic economic tool of plot reallocation. As additional restrictions arising from the WHS take effect in the property's buffer zones, reactions of local landowners and developers have also increased, revealing the need for more effective outreach to the local community to garner their support. The WHS designation also seems to have triggered a shift in the tourism marketing policy of the former ADTA, and the integration of the cultural heritage and tourims agencies forming TCA is likely to support work on cultural tourism promotion in Al Ain.

In conclusion, although the urban heritage has not been immediately explicit in cities within Abu Dhabi Emirate, it is nonetheless being recognized for its unique characteristics, created by a combination of factors special to this region and telling the particular story of the emirate's development. With the maturing of public organizations, legislation and capacity building with qualified local and expatriate professionals to support its conservation, the gradual development of its awareness among interested social groups, and perhaps most importantly its prioritization by emirate leadership, the urban heritage is slowly acquiring a more prominent role in the urban development context of Abu Dhabi.

Comparative Results

In evaluating the contexts of Turkey and the UAE, it is possible to conclude that while the two countries have quite different histories and socio-political situations, the developments occurring around the world, in terms of stakeholders and the role of urban heritage, have relevance in both of them.

The most important thread that one observes to tie the countries' experiences together is the general process of **modernization**, although each is at a different stage along this trajectory and have not necessarily followed the same sequence of steps to arrive where they are. In particular, both countries having predominantly Moslem and Middle Eastern societies, with elements of traditional and conservative cultures, the Emirati population can be said to be facing, since the late 20th century, some of the same key issues of modern life that the Turkish population was facing in the early 20th century with the establishment of the modern republic, or perhaps going back to the late Ottoman period. This has spatial dimensions such as the move from extended to nuclear family and household models that reflect in the move from traditional large houses to high-rise apartments, the development of participatory governance in planning and the establishment of civil institutions in regulating urban development.

In terms of shaping stakeholder values and attitudes toward the role of urban heritage, modernization overlaps largely with **democratization**, and the evolution from conservative to **progressive policy tools**. Referring to the range of policy tools for preserving the built heritage as formulated by Schuster et al (1997) in a sequence of most to least conservative, i.e. from ownership and operation, to regulation, incentives, property rights and information, Turkey's recent legislative and administrative reforms have enabled more advances along this line. However, tools such as plot reallocations to enable the transfer of development rights are also in use by Abu Dhabi's municipalities. In terms of the shift from top-down, government-controlled governance system toward multi-actor settings, Turkey has adopted more of these changes, although some multi-actor processes such as public-private partnerships can be found in the UAE as well. The federal government of the Emirates supports a decentralized governance structure more easily than in a unitary

state like Turkey, but local devolution in Turkey has also been in process, notably in relation to European Union accession.

In Turkey, concepts of urban heritage and its integration with the planning process have been a **long time in development**, resulting in more mature institutions and complex administrative systems. The much more substantial stock of built heritage to deal with, the economic dynamism in cities and the scarcity of financial resources in proportion to the size of the heritage stock, lend certain challenges to the effort of conservation. In the UAE, the drive to 'catch up' and excel on the global stage, and the exposure to international 'best practice' ideas brought by expatriate professionals, enables a potentially **faster adoption of progressive models**, though their true 'digestion' and internalizing by the local community naturally requires more time. Conversely for the UAE, time is short, but financial resources more ample. Also distinguishing the UAE are the multicultural collisions of professional and cultural practices, and the unusual, 'post-modern' combinations that result from it. In both countries, however, the fact that **promoting heritage** against development involves a **struggle,** is not so different. No matter how much wealth there may be, the action of engaging with urban heritage depends on the interest and will by those with the power to allocate and mobilize resources. Both countries thus prove themselves to be **part of the same global community**, where the future of urban conservation requires stakeholders to value and harbor a positive attitude toward the urban heritage.

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