

INTRODUCTION

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Introduction: innovative heritage-based post-crisis urban recovery strategies

Christer Gustafsson^{1*}  and Matthias Ripp²

Resilience is a concept that has become more and more common during the last decade. Originally used in physics and psychology, just recently it has been transferred to the field of urban planning, urban development and cultural heritage. The purpose of this Special Issue of the international journal *Built Heritage* is to examine, and discuss, how the concept of resilience can be related to cultural heritage. We understand resilience here in the sense of the SHELTER Resilience definition which defines different phases before, during and after a disaster or crisis.

While several policy documents, publications and international charters are dealing with the question of how cultural heritage can be protected and safeguarded in particular during disasters and crisis, we want to expand the understanding of cultural heritage to also include its role as a resource in urban resilience. We felt that only focusing on cultural heritage as a precious object that is in need of protection is neither taking into account a more contemporary understanding of cultural heritage as a system and process which is consisting of persons, objects but also functions, context etc., nor a more realistic and detailed concept of resilience, which — originating in systems logic — has more than one role to offer for cultural heritage.

With recent times' new understandings and interpretations of cultural heritage, preservation and conservation principles and praxes have also been changed according to e.g., new challenges and opportunities which have

occurred in times of sustainable development and resilience. From a focus on protection and restoration only, we can find an increased interest on adaptive re-use of historic urban environments where we can recognise spill-over effects in relation to sustainable development and resilience. This put attention to the question how preservation of cultural heritage could work as a catalyst for sustainability and resilience. Accordingly, cultural heritage advocates need to taking the initiative in cross-sectoral, system-wide and inter-disciplinary collaborations.

This claims for an entirely new paradigm for the cultural heritage sector: a heritage-led development where cultural heritage is understood as an infrastructure for inclusive, sustainable and innovative reuse and preservation as economic as well as social and cultural investment. In a post-COVID-19 scenario, cultural heritage planning could then be mainstreamed and clearly integrated into resilience strategies.

This Special Issue shall examine if and how these two systemic concepts - cultural heritage and resilience — can be connected and activated for the benefit of people. Following the Council of Europe's Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Council of Europe 2005), rather than a model of intrinsic heritage values, we suggest also to focus more on the role of people in cultural heritage, which clearly makes a lot of sense in connection with urban resilience. In similar way, the connection between resilience and cultural heritage has been debated within e.g., international organisations as ICOMOS and ICOM. A number of research projects with the objectives to study these relations have been financed by the European Commission (e.g., ARCH, HYPERION, ROCK, RURITAGE, CLIC, Be.CULTOUR, and SHELTER).

*Correspondence:

Christer Gustafsson
christer.gustafsson@konstvet.uu.se

¹ Department of Art History, Uppsala University (SE), Uppsala, Sweden

² Department for cultural heritage, Regensburg, Germany



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When we as editors started the preparation of this special issue the COVID-19 pandemic was rather new. Its direct impact on our daily life, e.g., how and where we work, how and if we travel, visit museums, how we participate in cultural heritage, culture and learning activities and processes, etc., was only beginning to unfold. While we as editors have been part of many initiatives, the general role that has been given to cultural heritage in these discussions and projects was still rather limited to the role of physical objects that get damaged or destroyed and need to be preserved and conserved. While we do not question the need for safeguarding, we want to broaden the vision and also include qualities of resilience, the role of cultural heritage as a place of identity, for health, etc. in the discussion. We are therefore very happy on the contributions that we have received and which deal with:

- Developing an identities-based approach to support more robust resilience and recovery in heritage planning and management (Jones and Pappas). This article develops an innovative theory-based approach for resilience based on identities.
- Scope and Limitations of Heritage-based Resilience: Reflections from Nepal (Chapagain). A contribution that is discussing critically also where Heritage-based Resilience is not a helpful strategy.
- A metamodel for heritage-based urban recovery (our own contribution) where we explain and elaborate a metamodel for heritage-based urban recovery that is based on a systemic understanding of cultural heritage (New Heritage Approach) and evaluate how it can be used in urban recovery and urban resilience.
- Heritage Amid the Pandemic: The Meaning of Visiting (Dewi): an article which examines the role of heritage sites within the recent pandemic and how they have contributed to urban resilience.

It is also important to note that the ‘other’ big conceptual answer to today’s challenges: sustainability - materialised through the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) - is not a competing concept for resilience, but rather on to be integrated. The goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities says ‘make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable’. Cultural heritage is in target 11.4 explicit mentioned ‘strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage’. At the moment UNESCO is developing 22 new indicators for monitoring culture and cultural heritage in the UN SDGs. Here is not preservation of cultural heritage regarded as a cost to the society – instead the focus is on culture’s and cultural heritage’s importance for environment & resilience, prosperity & livelihoods,

knowledge & skills, and inclusion & participation. In the New Urban Agenda (United Nations 2017) both resilience and cultural heritage are highlighted, however not in connection to each other as common resources.

In a modern world where it seems that a state of crisis is rather the new normal and not the exception – it does not help to argue and compete between different conceptual approaches. We strongly believe that there is room for both, and we also need both. For the cultural heritage sector however, sustainability as the more mainstreamed concept is closer to its own prevailing narrative – to preserve. While resilience includes a strong momentum of change and also a certain necessity for agility, the cultural heritage sector was a little bit more reluctant to jump the train.

However, we see at least in 2022 and 2023 that resilience and cultural heritage has been highlighted in several international and EU documents besides the new indicators for culture for the UN SDGs, e.g., by EU in the report Strengthening Cultural Heritage Resilience for Climate Change and in the Urban Agenda on cultural heritage in Europe. This is a promising start, and it seems like the discussion is shifting - for example with the more widely spread inclusion of Nature-based Solutions also in a cultural heritage context. We are very happy and proud to contribute to this expanding field with this Special Issue.

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