

Heritage inflation in the discourse of conflicts and alliances What will be the future implications for the inheritance?

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Abstract

Within the framework of globalisation and the identity crisis, heritage has become a prominent concern that is increasingly engaging various social actors with differing and perhaps conflicting perspectives and objectives. The topic of heritage is increasingly garnering global attention as a matter of both progress and individuality. Currently, nearly everything can be considered heritage. Amidst the rapid pace of modern society, legacy appears to be the sole enduring and reliable aspect that humanity may rely on for guidance and stability.

In recent decades, the notion of heritage has expanded beyond individual buildings to encompass locations, urban ensembles, and landscapes, all of which serve as tangible evidence of human activity. The magnitude of this mobilisation has been characterised as a genuine fixation or inflation of legacy, which is typical of modern society. This article centres on the discourse surrounding heritage inflation and its ramifications for the future of heritage.

Key words: *Inflation, Heritage, Identity, Conflicts, Alliances*

Introduction

The concept of urban heritage, as it is currently defined in official discourse and academic research, is relatively new compared to the traditional focus on archaeological excavations, sites, historical monuments (both movable and immovable), and natural landmarks (Babelon, 2000). In general, interest in heritage has steadily increased during the latter half of the twentieth century, and its definition has become more expansive. This concept, rather than being unchanging, has been significantly enhanced over time and has continuously evolved. It is a topic increasingly capturing global attention as a matter of progress and self-definition.

After recent additions, heritage can be defined as the entirety of all assets, both natural and man-made, that have value attributed to them (such as historical, aesthetic, symbolic, or identity-related value). These assets can be tangible or intangible and have no limitations in terms of time or location. They can either be inherited from ancestors or collected and preserved to be passed on to future generations. Communities have the responsibility to preserve a public good when private individuals are unable to fulfil this duty.

Currently, heritage exists at various levels, encompassing all geographical dimensions, ranging from local neighbourhoods and streets to the globalised realm shaped by globalisation and tourism (Drouin et al., 2019). Nearly everything is considered heritage, and the inclination towards "heritage everything" as a worldwide phenomenon and a principle of differentiation has evolved gradually since the 19th century. Nevertheless, it had a significant increase in speed starting in the 1980s. The continuous addition of increasingly contemporary pieces is "inflating" the heritage collection and giving rise to several inquiries:

- Are we not becoming a civilization that aims to preserve everything without ever lamenting the loss of anything?
- Will we not experience a time characterised by the dominance, influence, control, and almost oppressive nature of memory? (Choay M.E., 2000)

Some academics characterise contemporary societies as having a genuine fixation with property, indicating the extent of this mobilisation. This extends well beyond just personal belongings. The objective of this article is to emphasise this matter by showing the discourse surrounding it.

Methodology

Memory serves as a sanctuary for certain individuals or as a subject of conjecture for others, while sites of remembrance transform into strongholds to be safeguarded by groups that perceive a sense of vulnerability due to the rapid pace of historical change. The discussion surrounding the pursuit of identity and its connection to history and legacy has resulted in an increase in the value placed on heritage, known as heritage inflation. The purpose of our article is to present this argument, emphasising the conflicts and alliances that try to guide or expand the lines of thinking regarding the connection between history and the identity of societies. The foundation of our approach relies primarily on both historical and contemporary documentation.

Results and Discussion

The preservation and representation of historical and cultural heritage

Heritage refers to a compilation of concrete or abstract resources that has the quality of connecting previous and future generations. Consequently, it is connected to an inheritance that will be transmitted, originating from the historical background, which may vary in age, of the specific location or group. Defining this term is challenging due to its ever-changing nature, since each generation tends to alter the temporal boundaries that identify legacy objects. Conversely, it is a phrase with multiple meanings, making it polysemous.

The traditional definition encompasses all assets inherited from one's predecessors. Patrimonium, strictly defined, refers to the inherited property that is legally passed down from parents to their children (Choay M. e., 2000). Another interpretation of this concept is rooted in the idea of gathering and passing on wealth; hence, patrimony inherently involves a connection with time, transmission, and the frequently progressive process of enhancing value (Chaudoire, 2004). This word consistently straddles the line between upholding tradition and the ongoing development of a shared benefit. Ph. Chaudoire defines this concept as our ability to integrate ourselves, both as individuals and as a group, into a specific period of time and to collectively embrace this shared asset that shapes our identity.

Heritage encompasses diverse sectors that are both distinct and interconnected, forming the foundational elements of cultural identity across the past, present, and future. An increasing number of individuals are discovering their sense of self, ancestral heritage, and even fulfilling professions through a diverse array of physical and abstract resources encompassing environmental, cultural, or architectural elements. The term "heritage" has its origins in the domain of legal terminology. The term originates from the Latin word "patrimonium," which refers to the inheritance that is transmitted within the familial sphere. According to Chaudoire

(2004), a community's common property, such as that of a human group, is an inheritance from the past.

Regardless of the specific definition, two concepts are particularly prominent: inheritance and transmission. The concept of inheritance was originally envisaged as the passing down of wealth and possessions inside a family. However, it gradually evolved to encompass the passing down of resources and benefits to a wider community. This represents a significant advancement, broadening the scope of heritage to encompass all that is universally shared—that which society deems valuable enough to be transmitted to future generations.

Heritage, in its most comprehensive sense, encompasses all assets that are collectively regarded as valuable and deserving of preservation for future generations. It is an inheritance that individuals and communities identify with, as they consider it to be both meaningful for their history and invaluable for their future. Rautenberg defines legacy as encompassing artefacts, buildings, or practices that are deemed valuable enough to be preserved, if not safeguarded (Rautenberg, 2003).

The concept of heritage encompasses intangible aspects that are not tangible but hold significant significance in the understanding of legacy and individuals' connection to a certain location. Heritage comprises intricate connections that bind individuals to a specific location (Schwach, 1998). According to Gaston Bachelard, the city serves as a metaphor for time and is distinct from architecture. It primarily functions as a space that contains compressed time (Bachelard, 1957).

Andrea Bruno supports the idea that heritage includes an intangible memory that comes from the traditions or historical context of a place. Heritage refers to the notion of the passage of time, which establishes the fundamental basis of a city's identity and the sense of belonging to a certain region (Bruno, 1998).

Regarding the entirety of heritage

The examination of heritage and its different designations, through numerous works and research, has underlined the elasticity, diversity, and evolution of the idea. Today, the term "heritage" encompasses all the assets passed down from the past, ranging from the distant to the recent, including cultural items like paintings, books, and man-made landscapes, as well as natural resources, sites, and monuments. This broad definition has emerged due to the increasing emphasis on historical significance and the recognition of the risks associated with industrialization, urbanisation, and related disturbances. Tomas (2004).

According to certain researchers, the concept of heritage, which was originally associated with family, economic, and legal systems, has evolved in recent times. Previously, heritage primarily referred to archaeological sites, historical monuments, and natural landmarks. Scholars such as Babelon (2000), Rautenberg (2003), and Choay (2004) support this change in meaning. This dynamic idea has undergone significant enrichment over time and has continued to change, transitioning from a singular vision to a more widespread perspective of legacy. Over the past few decades, the understanding of heritage has expanded beyond individual buildings to include locations, urban ensembles, and landscapes. Examples of these include town centres, vernacular architecture, and natural landscapes.

The term "heritage" encompasses the concept of an inheritance passed down by preceding generations, evoking the genuineness of specific items, their worth, the significance of tradition or reverence for history, a system of laws and regulations, establishments, tourism and academic customs, adaptive architecture, and even cultural advancement. Heritage refers to an inherited resource that can be either utilised or exploited for its added value. It symbolises modernity, as it has always been the result of creation. It serves as a transmitter of meaning, promotes cultural development, and acts as a gathering place to enhance social bonds. Moreover, to use a trendy phrase, it serves as the most advantageous companion to sustainable growth, as it has already exhibited its long-lasting nature across various periods and locations (Neyret, 2004).

The topic of heritage is gaining increasing global attention as a matter of both development and identity. Some thinkers argue that the concept of heritage is continually being developed. "Today, it is embarking on a distinct and impactful professional path" (Choay, 1996). However, no element inherently possesses the status of heritage. It only becomes heritage when certain population groups choose it based on a set of fundamental values that they must, to some degree, collectively agree upon. The players' unwavering conviction is crucial in establishing these specific artefacts as a legacy, distinguishing them from others.

There is a growing trend of designating more and more artefacts as heritage, done by both official organisations and other societal groupings. This movement is usually known as "patrimonialization." The latter pertains to the generation or formation of heritage. Patrimonialization refers to the process in which cultural or natural elements are recognised as valuable heritage assets that should be protected, enhanced, and passed down to future generations for their benefit.

Currently, nearly everything can be considered heritage, and the inclination towards "all heritage" is a result of the increasing number of objects, locations, and events. Several problems need to be addressed regarding the reasons for this "all-heritage" movement. This trend has sparked a significant debate, marked by conflicts and alliances among various researchers.

What is the reason behind the significant increase in the development of new heritage values in the past three decades?

- Are these preoccupations with storage not gradually supplanting all social initiatives?
- Will an excessive amount of memory ultimately result in memory depletion?

Cultural heritage inflation

In economics, "inflation" is a commonly used phrase. The term inflation, in accordance with its etymology, originates from the Latin word "inflationem," derived from the verb inflare, meaning to swell. It is a significant economic concept. In economic terms, inflation is a phenomenon characterised by a widespread and uninterrupted increase in prices. Inflation is specifically defined as an excessive expansion of the money supply relative to the level of production. This term is derived from economics to refer to the preoccupation with heritage. Architectural heritage is a significant factor in the conflict between various social groups, whose genuine interests and methods of claiming and justifying their rights must be comprehended (DI Méo, 2007). Nevertheless, the phenomenon of legacy inflation is met with opposition and criticism due to various factors, such as the high expenses associated with maintenance, the lack of fit for present-day purposes, and the hindrance it poses to significant

development initiatives. Similarly, there is a requirement to introduce new ideas in the process of demolishing and replacing ancient monuments, as observed throughout history (Choay, 1996).

- What is the cause of this phenomenon of heritage inflation?

Multiple dimensions contribute to this inflation:

The contemporary problem of modernity and the subsequent rise of novel values pertaining to heritage.

For certain individuals, the enthusiasm for heritage arises from a state of modernity in turmoil. The rapid pace of historical progress makes the past irrelevant before it can be fully understood. Bourdin (1984) argues that there is a replacement of memory with history in this case. In regards to F. Choay, she highlights that this method of experiencing the past from a remote standpoint generates three distinct movements: The past is no longer experienced or used as a reference for current actions, but rather assessed. Similarly, the present is documented in order to preserve an accurate record of it before it transitions into the past. The goal of heritage is to safeguard against future uncertainties. Memory serves as a sanctuary for certain individuals or as a subject of conjecture for others, while sites of remembrance act as strongholds to be safeguarded by groups that see a threat from the rapid pace of historical change. "The defence of a memory that is protected and kept exclusive by minority groups only serves to hide the truth about all places of memory." "Without the act of remembering and honouring, history would rapidly erase them" (Choay, 1996).

Guy Di Méo examines the significant increase in new heritage values that has occurred in the last three decades, emphasising that this surge is connected to the current crises in social structures, fundamental transformations in the economy and society, and a reassessment of abilities and trades. The author suggests that it is inherently appealing to connect this occurrence with the current crises of social and productive systems, which have been impacting Western countries for a similar time period. However, it is evident that this situation is multifaceted. Modernity presents a dual problem because it both poses a serious challenge to the dominant way of thinking and values and results from significant changes in both the economy and society (DI Méo, 2007).

Choay discusses architects who assert the artist's prerogative to create and, like their predecessors, aspire to have a lasting impact on urban landscapes. They reject being marginalised or confined to imitating historical styles in cities. They serve as a reminder that several styles have simultaneously existed, been placed side by side, and been expressed within the confines of a single city or structure. The allure of specific towns is intricately tied to the varied and distinct architectural styles and spatial arrangements they possess. They should not be immobilised by uncompromising preservation, but rather sustained. Owners assert their entitlement to unrestrictedly manage their property for their own enjoyment or financial gain (Choay, 1996).

The amplification of this concept has resulted in a surge of appeals for assistance in the pursuit of safeguarding cultural assets and the inclination of governmental bodies to address each and every appeal. It is important to highlight that this notion of heritage has arisen following the disturbances that have impacted historical regions.

The interplay between tradition and modernity

Jeudy discusses the concept of destruction in contemporary society, observing that modern societies tend to preserve and immobilise various elements such as territories, genetic specimens, and human embryos. This behaviour may suggest an attempt to eliminate any potential for destructive forces.

Assuming the following premise: preservation does not entail complete immobility, and the natural law dictates that worthless things must be destroyed and ruined, any attempt to prevent modern actions in an old setting to preserve it runs the risk of rendering it sterile. This level of contemplation poses a fundamental inquiry in dialectic: tradition and modernity are also interchangeable with preservation and innovation. Researchers argue that the issue of heritage spaces is not about opposing history and modernity but rather about integrating into modernity while acknowledging the different meanings of heritage and its complex relationship with tradition. History is viewed as a continuum of modernity, according to some scholars (Nowvel, 1998). Modernity primarily encompasses an attitude rather than being solely concerned with form. It represents a way of existing in relation to the urban environment.

The concept of modernity arises from the interconnectedness between the urban legacy and the people who reside in it. Paul Schwach argues that the modernity of historic centres is contingent upon the preservation of many functions, with housing being the most important. The issue of modifying tradition to suit the demands of modernity is thus both crucial and intricate. The act of creativity can be achieved by simultaneously maintaining and revitalising a legacy (Schwach, 1998). According to Chabert (1998), modernity should enhance the city's identity by implementing an organised system that optimises the utilisation of its buildings and transportation.

History is continuity

In light of this context, several scholars, specifically urban planners, affirm that, in the present day, creation is synonymous with transformation. They underscore the importance of continuity for history to remain vibrant and assert that any urban intervention is rooted in a culture of project development and, consequently, creation. This applies not only to the preservation of historic areas but also to the imaginative construction of our future. François Barré ponders the state of a society that, due to a lack of narratives, confuses memory with future plans. In this society, the past becomes a refuge, while the future is driven not by a longing for novelty but by apprehension about what lies ahead (Barre, 1998).

Francis Chassel shows that modernism and legacy can be combined effectively through skillful discussion, understanding of the context, and meticulous attention to detail (Chassel, 1998). The concept of heritage, referring to the essential and unalienable property shared by the entire nation as an inheritance received and to be transmitted to future generations, was introduced by the revolution. According to Andrea Bruno, this revolution simultaneously established the museum and the inventory and unleashed destructive forces against both the new and the old. The user inquires about the elements or issues that contribute to the contrast between the aesthetic classification of the new, which is associated with ugliness and vulgarity, and that of the ancient, which encompasses beauty and sacredness (Bruno, 1998).

Alain Bourdin posits that the ideology of heritage encompasses three dimensions: a concern over the potential loss of historical memory, a desire to derive inspiration from the past for future endeavours, and a humanistic philosophy that perceives individuals as part of a continuum that surpasses their existence. The legacy we receive from our children is what makes up the intergenerational connection (Bourdin, 1984).

Safeguarding architectural heritage serves as a means of reestablishing a connection with history and facilitating a dialogue between the past and the present. This is incorrect: devoid of nostalgia and conservatism, the purpose of preserving a structure is to maintain its vitality, both in terms of significance and functionality. Heritage is not simply an ancient artefact or an item in a museum; it mostly refers to the current living surroundings of the people who occupy it. The act of restoration, when performed, inevitably retains its inherent historical nature. Furthermore, it is an interpretive endeavour that intertwines the transient history of taste with, and sometimes contaminates, the realms of art, archaeology, anthropology, and ethnology. According to Bergeon (1990), under this perspective, the importance of adhering to established practices is considered a protective measure. However, it is important to acknowledge that the selection of these practices is influenced by the standards and principles of our current day, thus making their significance somewhat subjective.

Issues related to cultural heritage and identity

Within the current framework of globalisation, urbanisation, and the struggle to define one's identity, legacy serves as a significant symbol of personal and cultural identity for certain individuals (Chaudoire, 2004). Heritage has a crucial role in establishing and reinforcing the identity of a place or country, which is universally recognised and valued. Certain academics derive their sense of self from historical events and are hence dedicated to the preservation of architectural heritage. Therefore, certain individuals perceive transformations as harmful to the establishment of a sense of belonging.

Some individuals view the preservation of a legacy as a hindrance to enhancing living conditions. It serves as a lasting representation of our shared recollections. Heritage is the mechanism through which a society identifies itself, establishes its boundaries, and defines itself as a collective with its own resources. The social purpose of heritage is to manifest the presence of a collective entity, which is inherently intangible, by symbolically showcasing its communal resources in public. According to the author (Mathieu, 1992), it is a significant problem to understand and protect the real worth of heritage, utilise it for development, revive it, and pass it on to future generations.

Jacques Mathieu highlights that every era has established its own unique historical frameworks and perspectives on heritage (Mathieu, 1992). The semantic path enables us to perceive the constantly refreshed area resulting from the initiative linked to preserving the city's historic landmarks and urban heritage. By examining the various levels of assets included, we can gain insight into the conceptual challenges of defining legacy at a city-wide level.

Similarly, some individuals describe the concept of heritage as it pertains to its function in establishing identity, distinguishing societies, and encompassing the constituent components that define this concept. They state that heritage encompasses all the elements that form the foundation of each human group's identity and contribute to their distinctiveness from one another. Lamaison (1982) defines it as a collection of social actors, physical or abstract

commodities, and structured information that has been created, transmitted, and modified within a certain geographical area.

In this context, our longing for prominent features and a feeling of selfhood become prominent. In a world characterised by perpetual change, heritage appears to be the sole remaining piece of permanence and reference that humans possess. Choay argues that the present formation of identity is a response to a deficiency and does not stem from a "positive" process. According to Choay (1996), legacy no longer serves a productive purpose but rather serves to protect and preserve a threatened identity. Heritage encompasses diverse and interconnected sectors that form the foundational cultural identity of the past, present, and future. An increasing number of individuals are discovering their ancestral heritage through a diverse range of physical and non-physical resources, including natural, cultural, and architectural elements.

Memory and history

"Memory is a complex process that involves both the act of assigning value and the act of removing value, as well as the act of recalling and the act of forgetting" (Guillaume, 1980). Thus, specific portions of the past are given preferential treatment while others are overlooked, resulting in a continual reconstruction of the significance of previous events based on our current and future objectives and undertakings. Memory is the capacity to preserve previously acquired concepts, both at the individual and communal levels. Memory functions based on a sorting principle, where we choose, reinterpret, modify, or rebuild images and/or experiences from the past. Halbwachs (1877–1945) pioneered the examination of collective memory and the associated social structures in a comprehensive manner, establishing himself as a leading social scientist in this field. In 1950, the author describes two types of memory that we all engage in: individual memory, which pertains to our personal experiences, and collective memory, which involves recalling memories that are significant to the group we are a part of. Individual memory is connected to our personality, while collective memory is associated with the memories that hold importance for our group. Halbwachs demonstrates that our participation in several collective memories is a result of our membership in diverse groups, such as family, neighbourhood, and country.

Halbwachs (1950) distinguished between communal memory and history, emphasizing that continuity characterizes collective memory while segmentation, or a divide into periods, characterizes history. Memory serves as the link between fragments, generally emphasising similarities, whereas history concentrates on differences and oppositions. Furthermore, although recollections might vary and pertain to different people, history is singular and impartial.

Halbwachs demonstrates the correlation between space and the formation of memory, since space significantly influences the processes of memorising. "Every collective memory is inherently tied to a spatial framework, meaning that the place and the group mutually influence and shape each other." (Halbwachs, 1950; Reed, 1997). Specific locations or items in our surroundings function as landmarks, aiding in the formation and retrieval of memories. Today, it is imperative for professionals to elucidate the correlation between space and memory, since it is the root cause of the proliferation of legacy.

Is it necessary to maintain everything?

Since the advent of the Industrial Revolution, the concept of heritage has significantly expanded over the years. The concept of "patrimonialization" has become extensively prevalent in scientific discourse, prompting us to conduct further research on the subject. This typological extension of heritage is closely linked to an exceptional geographical coverage, which today includes almost one-third of the world's nations. Over time, the concept has undergone changes that have led to its fragmentation, dilution in everyday life, and trivialization. According to Rautenberg in 2003, it has also become more enriched to the point where it has evolved into a fresh way of contemplating our relationship with space and time.

Over the past few years, there has been a consistent increase in the inclusion of a greater number of artefacts and sites under the category of "heritage." Formerly characterised by its rural and rustic nature, legacy today encompasses working-class cultures and areas of industrial decay, evoking a sense of longing for bygone urban landscapes. Institutions worldwide are striving to establish a narrative about the past that emphasises the factors that guarantee the group's solidarity and consistency. The Canadian Encyclopaedia affirms that heritage conservation is significant as it addresses specific aspirations, particularly the desire to safeguard tangible connections to our historical origins and to establish a "sense of belonging" for those who lament the "ordinary" nature of numerous localities.

Let us address Bruno Foucart's inquiry: in the present day, does everything possess value and merit preservation, if only as a testament to its era and as a component of our shared recollection? Is there no potential for saturation? Isn't the expression of heritage carcinogenic? Amidst the burden of history and inside the confines of the museum, is there space remaining for innovation, vitality, and the current moment? Is age a mandatory condition for determining heritage?

The effects of heritage inflation on heritage

Several academics have verified that heritage inflation, also known as heritage logic, causes saturation effects, ultimately leading to the standardisation of heritage on a global level. The process of making conservation universal results in the emergence of shared identities. Another issue arises from the virtualization of the transfer of meaning. This signifies the vanishing of the genuine. The third issue pertains to the process of patrimonialization, whereby everything is being seen as cultural heritage. We can refer to a process of inheriting and passing down cultural significance as a form of patrimonial anticipation. Yvon Lamy highlights that in the present day, the matter of heritage is of concern to both state authorities and the associative movement (Lamy, 1996). However, there are those individuals in the Maghreb, Europe, and other regions that oppose and condemn this inflation of legacy. They do so because they believe it leads to increased maintenance expenses, a lack of fit for present-day purposes, and hinders significant development initiatives. Additionally mentioned are the necessity for innovation and the process of destruction and creation, which throughout history have resulted in new monuments replacing old ones (Choay, 1996).

Recently, the term has gained popularity after UNESCO introduced the "World Heritage" label in 1972 and the Year of Heritage in 1980. This success can be attributed to the desire to identify significant landmarks in a world where communal boundaries are becoming less clear, from small groups to humanity as a whole, and where various communities with

different characteristics and often conflicting interests are emerging. However, it is important to recognise that this new concept of "all heritage," as referred to by Pierre Nora as "heritage obsession," needs to establish guidelines and acknowledge that not everything can be considered heritage.

Conclusions

Amidst the prevailing context of globalisation, urbanisation, and the crisis of identity, heritage serves as a symbolic emblem of one's sense of self for certain individuals. Heritage plays a vital role in establishing and reinforcing the identity of an area or country, which is universally recognised and valued by all individuals. Certain academics derive their sense of self from historical events and are therefore dedicated to safeguarding architectural heritage. Therefore, certain individuals perceive transformations as harmful to the establishment of a sense of belonging.

Some individuals perceive the preservation of a legacy as a hindrance to enhancing living conditions. It serves as a tangible representation of our shared recollection, enduring over time. Heritage is the mechanism through which a society acknowledges its identity, establishes its boundaries, and identifies itself as a collective with its own resources. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of "all-heritage," or the widespread proliferation of heritage, where everything is increasingly considered valuable for preservation, protection, transmission, and even accumulation, is believed by many experts to be a consequence of a crisis in modernity. This phenomenon is also evident in the vanishing of genuine elements and the transformation of everything into cultural heritage. The incorporation of increasingly contemporary components is causing the heritage domain to expand excessively. This phenomenon leads to the saturation of effects, ultimately resulting in the standardisation of cultural heritage.

In response to Nora's inquiries (Nora, 1997), it is valid to inquire: How much will the act of preserving our shared cultural legacy result in an accumulation of unnecessary items in our memory and urban areas? Can excessive memory usage lead to memory depletion?

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