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Heritage Studies

Marie-Theres Albert · Roland Bernecker · Claire Cave · Anca Claudia Prodan · Matthias Ripp *Editors*

50 Years World Heritage Convention: Shared Responsibility – Conflict & Reconciliation

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Heritage Studies

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The idea to publish this scientific series emerged as a result of the transformation process of heritage from a cultural and natural asset that provides history and identity to a commodity with economic interests. Its contextual framework is provided by the UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) and the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme. The research focus of the series is the wide range of applications and constructions of heritage associated with the above-named standard-setting instruments and their corresponding perceptions and paradigms. The reason for this is the fact that despite – or perhaps because of – these standard-setting instruments on the protection of heritage, there is an enormous variety in the understandings of what heritage is, could be or should be.

Different interpretations of heritage are evident in diverse structures and perceptions, from material to immaterial, from static to dynamic or even from individual to social or cultural. These interpretations were expressed in paradigms formulated in very different ways, e.g. saying that heritage has an inherent cultural value or ascribing importance for sustainable human development to heritage. Diverse perceptions of heritage are associated with conservation and use concepts as well as with their underlying disciplines, including inter- and transdisciplinary networks. Regionally and internationally, theoretically and practically, individually and institutionally, the epistemological process of understanding heritage still finds itself in its infancy. Insofar the new series Heritage Studies is overdue.

The series aims to motivate experienced and young scholars to conduct research systematically in the broad field of Heritage Studies and to make the results of research available to the national and international, theoretically- and practically-oriented, disciplinarily and interdisciplinarily established heritage community.

The series is structured according to the key UNESCO conventions and programmes for heritage into three sections focusing on: World Heritage, Intangible Cultural Heritage and Memory of the World. Although the conventions and programmes for heritage provide a framework, the series distinguishes itself through its attempt to depart from the UNESCO-related political and institutional context, which dominates the heritage discourse today, and to place the theme of heritage in a scientific context so as to give it a sound and rigorous scientific base. To this end, each of the three main sections addresses four dimensions of the heritage discourse broadly framed as Theory and Methods, Paradigms, History and Documents, and Case Studies.

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Chapter 9
Going Beyond Tourism Attraction in the Festivalisation of World Heritage Cities

Zachary M. Jones

Abstract Tourism has long been noted as a double-edged sword for World Heritage cities that can lead to a wide range of socio-economic benefits while also introducing many stresses that both physically damage sites and affect local communities through gentrification and other socio-economic changes. Festivals, events and cultural mega-events are often framed with a focus on growing tourism, but they can also provide unique opportunities to align heritage with Sustainable Development Goals. This chapter explores these dynamics by looking at three trends that the festivalisation of heritage cities can lead to: establishing and promoting heritage-based city images; spreading out events to reduce stresses; expanding traditional definitions of heritage through involving local communities. Several examples from across Europe that have hosted the Expo, European Capital of Culture (ECoC) and the UK City of Culture (UKCoC) demonstrate varying alignments with the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the UNESCO 5Cs to promote the sustainable development and inclusion of historic environments in broader city strategies. The chapter concludes by calling for a more integrated governance approach that can reframe approaches to go beyond just tourism attraction while anticipating and avoiding the potential range of risks of festivalisation.

Keywords Cultural heritage · Cultural mega-events · Festivalisation · Mass tourism · Sustainable development

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9.1 Rethinking Tourism in World Heritage Cities

Cultural heritage tourism has long been identified as a double-edged sword with potential positive and negative impacts on historic sites (Ashworth, 2000; MacCannell, 1976). Yet is unlikely that the founders of the World Heritage Convention could have predicted the exponential growth of global tourism and its impact on World Heritage sites over the last 50 years. 2018 witnessed 1.4 billion international tourist arrivals (UNWTO, 2019), and studies have estimated that up to 50% of the tourism in Europe is driven by cultural heritage (O'Brien et al., 2015). On the one hand, this growth has led to an increase in conservation funding as well as supporting local economies and development (Nuryanti, 1996; Strauss & Lord, 2001), while on the other it has too often led to a loss of authenticity and introduced stresses that physically damage sites (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009). One increasingly common approach that cities have used to promote themselves and grow tourism has been through festivalisation strategies (Quinn, 2009; Santa-Cruz & López-Guzmán, 2017). Such approaches typically aim at rebranding cities, focusing on culture and cultural heritage as attractors to provide a new identity, and are often used by many post-industrialised cities (Bianchini & Parkinson, 1993). Festivalisation strategies can range from smaller week-long cultural events, music or film festivals and biennales to year-long cultural mega-events such as the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) and other Capital/City of Culture (CoC) programmes worldwide (Green, 2017; Jones, 2020). García and Cox (2013) found that most host cities experienced a tourism boost during the year hosting the ECoC and long-term tourism numbers surpassed those of the event within 5 years. One prominent example is the Matera-Basilicata 2019 ECoC, which saw overnight visits nearly triple in the 4 years between the awarding and hosting of the event (Ponzini et al., 2020a).

This chapter goes beyond a tourism-centric view of the festivalisation of heritage-rich cities by looking at the practical ways that event organisers, city planners and heritage experts can reframe these events to align with other long-term strategies and aims, including those of the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the UNESCO 5Cs (i.e., Credibility; Conservation; Capacity-building; Communication; Communities). Section 9.2 discusses the recent trend of World Heritage cities, particularly in Europe, turning towards festivalisation strategies, the potential threats this introduces and the opportunities it can present to connect WH properties with wider city visions and plans. Sections 9.3, 9.4 and 9.5 then use several examples that highlight how cultural mega-events can be used to establish heritage-based city images, spread out events to reduce stresses on key historic areas and expand traditional definitions of heritage. Section 9.6 concludes by examining some negative cases due to a missing cohesion between heritage and festival strategies and calls for more integrated tourism management that can help in seeking out more sustainable tourism models that can contribute to long-term goals and strategies. Many of the examples presented are derived from previous research that was carried out within a PhD (Jones, 2020)

and as part of the HOMEE Research Project (Heritage Opportunities/threats within Mega-events in Europe), funded by the JPICH 2017 Heritage in Changing Environments Joint Call (Ponzini et al., 2020b). Previously studied as in-depth case studies, the examples have been specifically selected to demonstrate ways that festivalisation strategies can and should go beyond purely pro-growth tourism objectives to contribute to long-term sustainable development.

9.2 World Heritage Cities and Festivalisation

Within Europe, many cities with a World Heritage-recognised urban quarter or district have hosted the ECoC. In fact, more than one-third of all host cities from 1985 until 2020 have successfully bid for and hosted this cultural mega-event (see Fig. 9.1). Without including the other cities in Europe or globally that have bid for this or other types of mega-events, such events have clearly become attractive for

Fig. 9.1 Location of ECoC host cities from 1985 to 2020 that also contain an urban area recognised as a World Heritage Site. (Note: Author elaboration based on Cultural Mega-Events by Jones, 2020, reproduced by permission of Taylor & Francis Group)

World Heritage cities. The upcoming Olympic host cities of Paris 2024 and Milan-Cortina 2026 reveal the ongoing continuation of this trend as areas within the Paris, Banks of the Seine World Heritage Site will host a number of competitions along with the Palace and Park of Versailles. The Ancient Roman Arena in the City of Verona World Heritage Site will also serve as the site of the closing ceremony of the 2026 Olympics. With such events poised, or at least intended, to attract mass tourism, there is a need for event organisers and city decision makers to anticipate such issues while also seeking to align with broader sustainable and heritage management goals.

There are a range of threats to sustainability that these mega-events can introduce. First, mass tourism can overwhelm sensitive heritage spaces that are not designed to handle such high numbers of visitors (Zubiaga et al., 2019). Such high visitor numbers typically lead to increases in pollution from traffic or littering. Beyond physical threats, intangible changes can also occur, ranging from gentrification to general increases in costs adjusted for tourists rather than locals, affecting sites' authenticity as well as the meanings of heritage (Gravari-Barbas, 2018). Beyond local impacts, global tourism has an increasing carbon footprint, and tourism transport alone represents 5.3% of total global emissions (UNWTO, 2019), introducing many long-term climate change-induced threats to World Heritage sites (Fatorić & Seekamp, 2017). Considering these issues, particularly in light of the recent weaknesses to an overreliance on tourism revealed by the pandemic, city decision makers and event organisers must seek out other relevant uses of large events and festivals in World Heritage cities, particularly those that can link to the Sustainable Development Goals and other UNESCO-defined aims.

Though there may not be an obvious alignment between cultural mega-events and the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach promoted by UNESCO, a deeper investigation into the ways these events come to be planned within heritage-rich cities highlights the potential to meet many of the promoted aims. HUL aims to reintegrate historic areas of cities into wider activities and plans, to work against them becoming mere stage sets for tourists (Bandarin & Van Oers, 2012, 2015; Veldpaus et al., 2013). The approach aims to break away from historic district/quarter thinking that isolates urban heritage and instead embraces the historic city in its entire complexity, integrating tangible and intangible aspects. Cultural mega-events can represent a key moment for cities to develop new planning and governance strategies (Jones, 2019); for World Heritage cities, this can mean seeking out new ways of promoting or activating urban heritage spaces. CoC events have also been shown to play a critical role in cultivating public participation (Tommarchi et al., 2018) and could be harnessed as part of wider community engagement tools for urban heritage management or to address dissonant heritage narratives, as is discussed in the following sections. For these reasons, and as previously argued in Jones and Ponzini (2018), there are existing alignments between the use of mega-events and the management of historic urban environments. Considering that World Heritage cities have embraced hosting cultural mega-events in the recent past and near future while the pandemic has left cities questioning typical tourism models, this chapter presents several examples of how events can go beyond pro-growth

tourism strategies to align with broader physical, social and economic sustainability goals.

9.3 Establishing Heritage-Based City Images Through Cultural Events

The ECoC program began in 1985 and has become especially popular over the past several decades for its perceived ability to help cities establish new identities based on cultural production or its existing cultural heritage offer. Glasgow 1992 was notably the first host city to demonstrate how a de-industrialised city could use the event to establish a new city image and begin to shift trends of decline (García, 2005; Mooney, 2004). Other cities have since used the event to bring about tangible or intangible transformations and establish themselves as cultural destinations. Two such examples are the Genoa 2004 European Capital of Culture and the Hull 2017 UK City of Culture (UKCoC), one of the national programmes inspired by the ECoC. Both cities invested significantly in their historic built environment to promote themselves at a national and international level on the basis of their cultural heritage. Genoa has since seen sustained tourism growth in the 15 years following the event, at a higher rate than the national average, with a growing share of visitors attending heritage sites and museums (Jones, 2020). Notably, the city's unique system of urban palaces and streets was recognised as a World Heritage Site in 2006, one of the main goals of city decision makers (Jones, 2022). Meanwhile, Hull used the event to promote a heritage education through the arts approach that made the city's history and heritage accessible to a wide range of local citizens and visitors (Tommarchi & Bianchini, 2022). The event also saw a huge boost to the city's tourism, with over six million visits recorded during the year (CPPI, 2018), and the city plans to continue investing in its cultural heritage in the years to come through the Yorkshire Maritime City Project. Both cities utilised the events to carry out ambitious heritage-focused urban regeneration schemes resulting in a significant impact on the historic areas of these cities while connecting to broader city development and growth by embedding the city's heritage within long-term plans and strategies.

Regarding the UNESCO 5Cs, the ECoC and UKCoC supported conservation, capacity-building and communication of heritage values to local and international audiences. The events brought significant funding that allowed both Genoa and Hull to complete wide-reaching urban regeneration and conservation programs. The particular governance of the CoCs also required a range of actors to collaborate together to complete works (Tommarchi et al., 2018), increasing local capacity-building even if, as in the case of Genoa, such networks were not retained over the long term (Jones, 2019). In terms of SDGs, there were noticeable improvements to Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9) as well as Good Jobs and Economic Growth (SDG8), particularly regarding the tourism sector in Genoa over time. The city has also largely avoided concerns of gentrification over the years due to its particular urban

structure in the historic city centre that has retained a diverse socio-economic mix (Briata, 2010). While it is too early to observe long-term effects in the case of Hull, the UKCoC has established a new approach to promoting and investing in the city's cultural heritage as a driver of growth and development, locating heritage as a key element in future plans.

9.4 Spreading Out Event Locations to Reduce Localised Stresses

One of the most immediate and direct threats that mass tourism poses to cultural heritage is the physical damage that can be caused through environmental impact (Coccossis, 2016; Richards, 2018). Such issues are aggravated when visitors focus on a few key 'must-see' areas, often World Heritage sites, which creates an imbalance of isolated tourism effects. Festivals, CoCs and mega-events can be used to address such acute problems by diffusing events across urban and peri-urban areas to promote alternative and under-recognised areas of cities, demonstrating the wider historic contexts of World Heritage sites. In this way, event programmes can be specifically designed to help reduce stresses on already highly visited areas of cities and to draw visitors and locals alike to new areas. Such processes can be observed during the 2015 Milan Expo and the transversal Expoincittà programme that was carried out in tandem across the metropolitan region.

Earlier festivals in Milan had already established a tradition of spreading out events to alternative or previously overlooked quarters of the city, initially through the popular Design Week as well as other events like Piano City Milano or Fashion Weeks that have led to the formerly industrial neighbourhoods of Lambrate and Tortona becoming recognised as the city's cultural districts (Armondi & Bruzzese, 2017). As the Expo site was located outside of the city limits in a largely rural area, the Expoincittà programme introduced thousands of small- and micro-scale cultural events throughout the city of Milan. The programme provided gallery spaces for exhibits or small public spaces and squares for performances. Rather than using the prominent or highly visible spaces of the city, the programme utilised many 'left-over' spaces, activating them through cultural activities and attracting visitors to parts of the city they might not normally visit in order to participate in such events (Di Vita, 2022). Expoincittà has since been rebranded as YesMilano! and continues to schedule and host events and festivals across the city to help diversify the range of offerings and attractors.

Another example is the aforementioned Matera-Basilicata 2019 ECoC, noteworthy for its significant increase in tourism before hosting the event. Event organisers developed five 'alternative' pathways stemming out from The Sassi and the Park of the Rupestrian Churches of Matera World Heritage Site to encourage visitors and locals to explore areas beyond the historic city centre and the fragile Sassi area. Unfortunately, such efforts were not tightly linked with the spatial organisation of

events throughout the year of celebration, with only occasional events taking place along these new pathways. Without stronger incentives, many tourists were unaware of the city's broader cultural and natural heritage and typically followed the pre-existing touristic routes within the city centre (Ponzini et al., 2020b). Though these new alternative pathways may not have been activated to their full potential during the event itself, they may yet become part of the ECoC's legacy as it introduced a rethinking of such spaces and potential ways to move through the city. In the future, these may yet be utilised and integrated with future strategies to manage the touristic impact on the historic centre. Such an approach can help to create more Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11) and work towards Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10) by spreading out the potential benefits of tourism to reach the areas of cities too often overlooked by tourists and left behind by more central areas in terms of the spread of economic benefits.

9.5 Expanding Traditional Definitions of Heritage Through Cultural Mega-Events

One of the emerging ways that cities have come to utilise cultural mega-events has been to highlight alternative heritage spaces or narratives that may have been previously overlooked or considered too challenging to confront. Events like the Essen for the Ruhr 2010 ECoC emphasised the region's rich industrial heritage, concentrating a significant portion of the event around the Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex in the Essen World Heritage Site. Such trends take an important step towards more locally framed understandings and valuing of heritage that go beyond the cleaned-up versions presented for tourists (Aygen, 2013; Barthel, 1996). Such endeavours frequently invite local communities into these processes, one of the precepts of the 5Cs, and can represent an important step in reconnecting inhabitants with their own heritage (UNESCO, 2007). Two such examples can be seen in the Wrocław 2016 and Pafos 2017 ECoCs, where the events were used to address the difficult histories of both cities. The Polish city of Wrocław is noteworthy for undergoing a complete population exchange following the Second World War. Previously known as the German city of Breslau, the city used the 2016 ECoC as an opportunity to recognise and highlight its multi-cultural, multi-lingual past rather than trying to ignore it, dealing with themes of emigration and immigration within the event (Sanetra-Szeliga, 2022). A key part of the programme was awarding microgrants to local citizens and organisations to stage events in or requalify alternative spaces, giving them the opportunity to define new spaces of value within the city. The microgrant scheme was deemed so successful that it has been continued as part of the ECoC legacy (Sanetra-Szeliga, 2022).

The 2017 Pafos ECoC also provided the opportunity to address the city's, and more broadly the entire country's, difficult history of Turkish-Cypriot heritage spaces and memories. Rather than focus exclusively on the city's existing World

Heritage Site, the candidature phase for the ECoC was a bottom-up process that provided the opportunity for local volunteers along with previously displaced Turkish-Cypriot residents to be involved to a much greater degree in the forming of the proposal and addressing dissonant heritage narratives (Dova et al., 2019). The eventual programme included a number of restoration projects aimed at the historic centre area of Ktima and included several Turkish-Cypriot sites that had been abandoned. Works included renovations and urban improvements to the Attikon and Palia Ilektriki cultural centres along with pedestrianising larger portions of the historic centre, making it more accessible. As Pafos was already a well-established tourism destination, notable for its seaside resorts, the ECoC went beyond a purely tourism-driven approach to begin focusing more on the city's cultural heritage for the benefit of local inhabitants (Dova et al., 2022). Public participation has taken on a leading role within CoC events in recent years (Tommarchi et al., 2018), and though these processes can encounter many challenges, both Wrocław and Pafos were successful in broadening conceptions of heritage that are meaningful for locals and not overly simplified or sanitised for the sake of tourists. In this way, such approaches begin to work towards creating Peace and Justice (SDG 16) by addressing past wounds and difficulties, bringing together diverse groups of society that have been in conflict.

9.6 Risks and the Need for Long-Term Governance and Management

This chapter has demonstrated the potential for cultural mega-events to go beyond a mere pro-growth model of touristification of heritage spaces and cities, showing some of the ways they can be used to align with the aims of the HUL approach, SDGs and the UNESCO 5Cs. While no means an exhaustive list, the examples presented here overview some of the ways that CoCs, cultural mega-events and other festivals can be oriented to maximise the benefits for World Heritage sites and host cities. Yet ensuring that such events do not threaten World Heritage cities requires adequate preparation, planning and governance of these processes from the bidding throughout the legacy phases. One of the surprising issues detected during the case study research conducted as part of the HOMEE Project was that none of the host cities had developed specific tourism management plans in preparation for hosting a cultural mega-event. This finding revealed a clear imbalance of these events being utilised to attract a wide range of visitors without event organisers or city decision makers actively preparing for the inevitable tourism-related stresses that such events would introduce. This distance between heritage management and tourism is by no means new (Du Cros, 2001) but is an issue that should be addressed in the planning and organisation of future events within heritage-rich cities.

While the chapter has largely focused on the potential positive outcomes, disconnects between event planning and the development of long-term strategies and

policies can indeed lead to negative outcomes. In the case of the Matera-Basilicata 2019 ECoC, interviews with representatives from the foundation that organised the events, the city municipality and the ministry of culture revealed that each of these entities considered the issue of tourism and tourists themselves to be outside their official purview (Ponzini et al., 2020b). Only the regional tourism body actively focused on tourism issues, and their main priority was to grow tourism as much as possible, particularly as the region of Basilicata is the second-least visited region in the entire country of Italy (ISTAT, 2019). A disconnected approach that overlooks critical issues like tourism can lead to cities being woefully unprepared for mass tourism and the wide range of physical and socio-economic impacts, and the city of Matera found itself ill-prepared to manage tourism flows during the peak tourism season. The case of the Liverpool 2008 ECoC is another cautionary example where the much-celebrated event interacted little with the city's World Heritage Site and instead aligned with future urban growth and development in city strategies (Jones, 2017; West, 2022). The long-term effects of this approach led to the unfortunate delisting of the Maritime Mercantile City World Heritage Site in 2021, only the third ever site to lose its status. While the delisting was by no means a direct result of the 2008 ECoC, the example of Liverpool stands as a severe lesson of the risks of festivalisation strategies that do not prioritise heritage or link to long-term Sustainable Development Goals.

Just as the examples cited in this paper have demonstrated the potential for these events to positively rethink the heritage–tourism dynamic, cities must work towards more multi-disciplinary governance and management of events, tourism and heritage in order to anticipate a wide range of issues and work towards more sustainable approaches. As many of the events' elements are planned early on during the bidding phase, it is crucial for heritage experts to be involved within the organising committees to avoid eventual tourism stresses while also including greater public participation to consider under-recognised local heritage spaces that relate to the context of globally recognised World Heritage sites. A more integrated governance approach can be the key to ensuring that event plans are embedded within longer-term city strategies rather than framing them as one-off tourism-centric events. Naturally, the COVID-19 pandemic introduced an unexpected global shift in tourism trends. This disaster has demonstrated that the complete lack of tourism can be just as damaging to historic cities as mass tourism (UNESCO, 2020) as local economies dependent upon visitors have struggled to survive, and tourism-centric approaches may threaten the future viability of heritage-led urban regeneration or promotion schemes. While the future of global tourism remains unclear, and it may take several years until tourism returns to pre-pandemic levels, this situation can provide an opportunity for heritage cities to reflect and rethink the role of tourism and how it can interact with and support heritage going forward. While the future of cultural events, festivals and mega-events are just as uncertain, as they adapt to post-COVID scenarios, they can continue to serve as tools to explore and experience heritage through new lenses that focus on and involve local communities in ways that align with and can help achieve long-term sustainable goals.

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