The role of cultural heritage in resilience planning: evidence from 100 Resilient Cities

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Abstract. As a container of accumulated experiences, cultural heritage connects past, present and future by transmitting knowledge to future generations through tangible/intangible assets. With this potential, cultural heritage can significantly contribute to community resilience, yet available resilience strategy documents place limited emphasis on cultural heritage. Based on this observed lack of systematic consideration, this paper analyses the resilience strategy documents presented in the 100 Resilient Cities Programme, and discerns six approaches towards cultural heritage, namely ignorance, economic development tool, identity construction, social component, physical integration tool, and comprehensive consideration. The paper discusses further ways cultural heritage can enhance community resilience.

Keywords: Resilience; Community Resilience; Cultural Heritage; Heritage Resilience; Resilience Planning.

Introduction

Urban and rural settlements embody the inherited cultural, social, political, economic, and technical knowledge, practices and assets throughout the history of societies. Although these values are aimed to be documented, conserved and sustained by global and local actors, some remain hidden in daily socio-cultural and socio-spatial practices of communities. Cultural heritage, as a container of accumulated experiences, connects past, present and future by transmitting this inherited knowledge to future generations through tangible and intangible assets (UNESCO, n.d.). The know-how embedded in cultural heritage holds great potential for the challenges faced by urban and rural settlements today, such as climate change, extreme natural disasters, globalisation, urban growth, wars and terrorism, and recently health crises such as epidemics, pandemics and beyond. Sustained cultural assets accommodate the traditional knowledge, which is proven historically through successes and failures against the challenges faced, and bearing the potential to bring the members of communities together through shared values, practices and spaces. As urban and rural settlements are increasingly threatened by an emerging array of risks today, resilience becomes crucial in coping with them (Berkes *et al.*, 2003; Altay-Kaya, 2019), and cultural heritage holds a substantial role in enhancing resilience (Fabricatti *et al.*, 2020).

Resilience planning and community resilience

The contemporary risk environment, characterised by disasters and crises that are caused by climate change, wars, terror or economic crises, poses a concrete threat to communities and cultural heritage. Resilience planning, a prominent approach in planning practice (Eraydın and Taşan-Kok, 2013), developed in response to this current landscape of uncertainty, aims at making cities and communities prepared for unexpected or projected threats, enhancing their capacity to cope with them and to adapt to change, while investing in development potentials (Adger, 2000; Nelson *et al.*, 2007).

Resilience perspective is significant with its comprehensive, multi-dimensional and multi-scalar undertaking, upholding universal values like human rights, democracy and sustainability (Altay-Kaya, 2021). Resilience planning accepts that unexpected problems will occur, and for better coping, cities and communities should develop strategies in relation to their prevailing vulnerabilities and adaptive capacities (Nelson *et al.*, 2007). Ecological, social, economic and urban dimensions should be comprehensively considered in resilience planning (Beatley, 2009), while operationalisation of the plan (Altay-Kaya, 2019) and cyclical feedback are equally important (Foster, 2006). Community resilience is described as the ability of communities to cope with disturbances based on their social, economic, institutional and physical capacities, most specifically based on their ability to work together for a common objective (Berkes and Ross, 2013). «Knowledge, skills and learning», «Community networks», «People-place connections», «Community infrastructure», «Diverse and innovative economy", and «Engaged governance» are the six attributes of community resilience asserted by Maclean *et al.* (2014). Similarly, values, knowledge, skills and learning ability, agency and self-organisation capacity are among the factors enhancing community resilience (Berkes and Ross, 2013). In this regard, learning from former experiences and learning from the past are critical inputs for resilience (Lu and Stead, 2013). This includes using inherited local knowledge, traditions and practices that are strongly connected to cultural heritage. Cultural heritage thus reveals its true potential for fostering resilience, while resilience planning ensures the conservation of cultural heritage and its transmission to future generations.

Heritage may become the direct focus of resilience planning, where cultural heritage is at risk in face of identified risks such as climate change, natural hazards, wars, and urbanisation. Even if not explicitly targeted, heritage holds a strong potential for building up resilience for communities in many aspects. This paper aims to underline this latent and under-valued potential. Claiming that heritage is an important tool for building resilience, the paper discusses the highlighted interactions between cultural heritage and resilience. It then examines the way cultural heritage had been referred to in the resilience plans of major metropolises in the world, developed under the framework provided by «100 Resilient Cities Network» (100RCN), named later as «Resilient Cities Network» (RCN).

The interplay between cultural heritage and social resilience

Cultural heritage, as documents of the history of humanity, refers to the existence of cultural identities and sense of belonging, by bonding humans with their physical surroundings (Labadi *et*

al., 2021). Such bonds are created through a cultural accumulation, since prehistoric ages, which can be represented by various tangible and intangible, movable and immovable cultural assets (Mason, 2002). Traditionally, cultural heritage conservation theory focused on the material aspects of heritage, emphasising the preservation of monuments and artefacts (Smith, 2006). However, in recent decades, there has been a paradigm shift towards more inclusive, community-based approaches that focus on the social attributes of heritage (Poulios, 2014). Consequently, the scope of cultural heritage has expanded to include all forms of cultural traces including archaeological findings, historic buildings, traditional tissues, modern built-environment, customs, production modes, handicrafts, narratives and beyond (ICOMOS, 1994; 1999; 2008).

Cultural heritage includes the historical layering of knowledge through time. Sustained cultural assets accommodate the traditional knowledge, enriched through cumulative successes and failures against challenges (Jigyasu, 2013; 2019). Heritage plays an essential role in shaping and conserving cultural identities of communities by providing links to the past, a sense of belonging and continuity of knowledge, practices and values across generations (Holtorf, 2018). Hence, it is a vital dimension for community resilience, whose potential contribution to other development dimensions is undervalued and neglected.

The growing importance of cultural heritage in international policy documents

Considering heritage as an input in resilience planning emerges in the international agenda through cornerstone documents for cultural heritage conservation. The Faro Convention (Council of Europe, 2005) shifts focus from heritage to people (Fabricatti et al., 2020) by conceptualising "heritage communities" as «people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations» (Council of Europe, 2005: 2b). The role of individuals, shared interest and responsibility, sense of belonging, and self-organisation capacity are indirectly revealed in the document as resilience components that can be enhanced by heritage communities.

The Hangzhou Declaration establishes direct relations between cultural heritage and resilience by stating that conserving the historic environment and safeguarding the relevant traditional knowledge, values, and practices enhances community resilience (UNESCO, 2013, p.8). The document directly refers to cultural landscapes, cultural practices, values and traditional knowledge as resilience components enhanced by heritage. Again, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (UNDRR, 2015) sets a direct relationship between cultural heritage and resilience by emphasising the part played by cultural heritage in understanding disaster risk (article 24d) and the protection of cultural heritage, including cultural institutions and historical sites as an investment in disaster risk reduction (article 30d).

The overarching role of heritage in achieving the «Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)» (UNESCO, 2015) is thoroughly explored in the report titled «Heritage and the Sustainable Development Goals» prepared by ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites). The document underlines the potential to be harnessed from cultural heritage through cultural landscapes, practices, knowledge, resources and values for reaching SDGs and resilience (Labadi et al., 2021). Culture is referred to in the report as a major resource for creativity, innovation and problem-solving for resilience (Fabbricatti et al., 2020). The above-mentioned major international documents show that cultural heritage's critical role for community resilience is increasingly recognised. On a similar stance, the recent literature on cultural heritage highlights the necessity to include it within resilience strategies (Fabbricatti et al., 2020; Holtorf 2018; Iavorone et al., 2019; Jigyasu, 2013). Yet, cultural heritage is still considered independently in common planning practice rather than being integrated as a structural component of resilience. Moreover, the positive reciprocal interactions between community resilience and cultural heritage need still to be unveiled. In this direction, this study seeks gaps in current resilience planning practices by analysing existing approaches to cultural heritage in urban resilience strategy documents (plans) published in the former 100RCN database, which covers the resilience plans of multiple cities worldwide, developed within their resilience framework and exemplifying different local contexts (100RCN, 2019).

The Analysis of different approaches in 100RCN urban resilience plans

The 100RCN was formerly a project of The Rockefeller Foundation, initiated in 2013. The programme aims at building resilience against social, physical and economic challenges of the century by establishing a global network of cities and providing resources for building resiliency strategies (100RCN, 2019). Until 2019, 74 cities had published their resilience plan online. Due to the ending of funding by The Rockefeller Foundation in 2019, the database is no longer available online. The Network pursues its activities under a new initiative, «Resilient Cities Network» (RCN). The resilience framework developed by 100RCN is still available (RCN, 2024). The presented research aims to identify prevailing approaches regarding cultural heritage in these urban resilience plans. The research comprises a three-staged content analysis examining the urban resilience strategy documents (100RCN, 2019).

Tab. 01 | Approaches in 100RCN urban resilience strategy documents

City	Report Name	Category
Athens	Redefining the City: Athens Resilience Strategy for 2030	Comprehensive Consideration
Byblos	Resilient Byblos: Connecting With Our Past, Creating Our Future	
Melaka	Resilient Melaka: Creating a thriving, liveable and smart Melaka	
Ramallah	Resilient Ramallah 2050	
Thessaloniki	Resilient Thessaloniki: A Strategy for 2030	
Colima	Colima Resilience Strategy	Physical Integration
Glasgow	Our Resilient Glasgow: A City Strategy	
Miami	Resilient Greater Miami & The Beaches	
Pune	Pune Resilience Strategy	
Rome	Rome Resilience Strategy	
Accra	Accra Resilience Strategy	Social Component
Amman	Amman Resilience Strategy	
Atlanta	Resilient Atlanta: Actions to Build an Equitable Future	
Bristol	Bristol Resilience Strategy	
Montevideo	Montevideo Resilience Strategy	
Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh's Resilience Strategy	
Puerto Rico	Resilient Puerto Rico	
Santiago	Human & Resilient Santiago	
Seattle	Seattle-Future City: Resilience Roadmap	
Surat	Surat Resilience Strategy	
Vancouver	Resilient Vancouver: Connect, Prepare, Thrive	
Juarez	Resilient Juarez: Resilience Strategy	Identity Construction
Louisville	Resilient Louisville	
Rio de Janerio	Resilience Strategy of the City of Rio de Janeiro	
Santiago de los Caballeros	Resilience Strategy Santiago de los Caballeros	
Tulsa	Resilient Tulsa	
Wellington	Wellington Resilience Strategy	
Bangkok	Resilient Bangkok	Economic Development Tool
El Paso	Resilient El Paso	
Kyoto	Resilient Kyoto	
Santa Fe	Santa Fe Resilience Strategy	
Semarang	Resilient Semarang: Moving Together Towards a Resilient Semerang	

The first stage (data extracting) analyses all information related to cultural heritage within the plans. The keywords searched are culture, heritage, traditional, historic, asset, and conservation. Secondly, the overall vision of the documents, identified challenges, and defined goals to release any approaches towards cultural heritage are skimmed. In doing so, headings, sub-headings, graphics, and diagrams where strategies/ policies/ plans/ actions directly related to cultural heritage, conservation, or use of traditional knowledge are identified.

The second stage (thematic examination) aimed at evaluating the prominent approach of the plans towards cultural heritage. Accordingly, documents were evaluated with respect to the predefined thematic questions, inquiring specifically whether cultural heritage is part of the identified challenges or goals, whether it is directly referred to, what the thematic stance towards cultural heritage is, its level of integration with the city, and what the specific conservation strategies are. These questions aimed to reveal cultural heritage strategies, policies or actions in the plans.

The third stage (evaluation) aims to classify how resilience strategies address cultural heritage based on the content and thematic analyses conducted at stages one and two. According to the analysis conducted, resilience strategy documents are classified into six categories with strategies differing in their level of consideration of cultural heritage. The identified categories are "ignorance", "economic development tool", "identity construction", "social component", "physical integration" and "comprehensive consideration". The categorisation of heritage approaches in plan documents, excluding the ignorance category, is presented in Tab. 1.

Prominent approaches towards cultural heritage in 100RC plans

The research findings reveal that the first category, ignorance, comprises the largest group of cities, which scarcely set any goal or principle regarding cultural heritage. Certain cities of the world rich in historical background are unexpectedly in this group. Paris is one example. The only action related to cultural heritage in the Paris strategy document (action 23) focuses on changes in heritage regulations for increased responsiveness to climate change. New York is another example. Cultural heritage is only distinct in the Energy actions (action 6), which aim to improve energy efficiency in historic buildings. In Washington DC, there are actions related to the cultural plan that primarily focus on preserving existing cultural institutions. The second group of plans put economic growth at the heart of cultural heritage policies. These aim at increasing tourist activities to create both a driver sector and employment opportunities. Here, cultural heritage is considered an economic devel-

opment tool, and renovation, refurbishment, rebuilding actions are the focus of interventions. In Bangkok for instance, heritage communities are aimed to be trained for entrepreneurship to support tourism and service sector development (goal 8). In Sante Fe, to invigorate the tourism market, the plan aims to revitalise cultural heritage by creating employment opportunities (action 25). Finally, in Kyoto, under the pillar titled «Linking Economy and Culture», cultural heritage is expected to foster economic development, as well as to benefit from economic development itself.

The third group of plans approach cultural heritage as a source for the construction of urban identity. The preservation of cultural heritage is considered for developing and strengthening cultural identity in these plans. In Louisville, goal 3.3. focuses on cultural heritage's contribution to creativity, knowledge, traditions, culture, meaning, and vitality. In Tulsa, shaping a shared identity for the diverse communities of the city is aimed to be achieved through cultural heritage. Finally, in Santiago de los Caballeros, the loss of cultural identity is defined as a challenge for the city, and developing a sense of belonging to the city, culture and history is set as a goal.

Plans that developed strategies towards cultural heritage by aiming at achieving social resilience form the fourth group, namely the social component. Documents in this group introduce principles designed to create awareness, promoting local culture, and integrating educational programmes. Intangible cultural heritage is brought forward to enhance social connections with cultural traditions, customs and handicrafts. For example, Vancouver identifies social cohesion and connection to culture as key indicators of community health and well-being, but also as a component of disaster resilience. Bristol aims at promoting «cohesive and engaged communities» by creating a «sense of collective identity and mutual support» grounded on the inclusive local cultural heritage, encouraging cultural diversity and safeguarding spaces where residents interact together. Finally, in Amman, cultural heritage is accepted within the social assets of the city along with conserved cultural traditions and customs. Amman identifies cultural heritage also as a historical asset with its historic buildings, archaeological sites and its old marketplace.

Within the fifth group, cities consider cultural heritage as part of decisions regarding urban systems by emphasising their physical integration into the city. Connection of cultural assets and sites to certain parts of the city by means of urban regeneration, improvements on transportation networks and green systems were the general aim. In Colima, there is a direct action on the refurbishment and reconstruction of buildings that have high cultural, historical, and architectural value. In Glasgow, retrofitting historic buildings to ensure long-term fitness for function and promoting climate adaptation is a planned action. Finally, in Rome, one of the main resilience challenges is identified as the «maintenance of the city's cultural heritage», and the goals on promoting cultural life, urban regeneration and landscape and natural heritage in the urban environment are proposed in response to that challenge.

The sixth and final group consists of cities that developed a comprehensive consideration of cultural heritage through economic development, community engagement, protection of culture, social cohesion, empowerment of community members, cultural identity and urban policies in a comprehensive way. Athens, Thessaloniki, Melaka, Byblos and Ramallah are the representatives of this category. In Athens, for instance, cultural heritage is considered an asset to foster urban identity and belonging, as part of a creative economic development, as part of the urban natural/green systems, as part of food policy and cultural activity planning. The Maleka resilience plan puts tangible and intangible cultural heritage assets at the core of their strategies to create engaged communities, a liveable city and collective governance. The aim is to assure the conservation of tangible/intangible heritage, enhancing economic development, promoting urban identity and belonging at the same time.

Conclusion The research proves the lack of a systematic consideration of cultural heritage in the resilience planning practice conducted as part of the 100RCN between the years 2016 to 2019. Many cities – 55% of the plans – lack a specific focus on cultural heritage in their plans. However, treating cultural heritage only as a tool for economic development is problematic as heritage values and social components of cultural assets are ignored. The sustainability of cultural heritage relies on the togetherness of both economic and socio-cultural values. The economic focus distinguishes the tourism sector as the main source of economic benefits, although traditional vocations can bring equal benefits. Cultural heritage can most effectively support resilience when it is considered with all the above-mentioned dimensions together, in a comprehensive way. The last group of documents provide enlightening insights in terms of specifying various roles of cultural heritage at once.

This paper aims to reveal the positive outcomes emerging from the synergies between cultural heritage and community resilience. It is claimed that while cultural heritage brings on major assets for enhancing resilience, resiliency helps the protection and conservation of cultural heritage values. In this manner, the sustainability and existence of movable/immovable and tangible/intangible cultural heritage is crucial in making cultural heritage «an active component of urban resilience» (Jigyasu, 2019). Cultural heritage, the inherited knowledge, traditions and practices embedded in the local culture, supports promoting belonging, assuring better community engagement, developing strategies that will fit into the local context and beyond. These aspects prove to be important criteria to achieve resilience policies. There is still the need to elaborate on these interactions in more detail.

This study suggests that the conservation of cultural heritage should be an aim per se in resilience planning, while cultural heritage should be considered comprehensively in resilience

planning processes for their potential contribution in terms of knowledge and technique, and their role as social catalyst. Cultural heritage policies can be included in all dimensions of resilience planning, rather than being subsumed under sectoral plans. A comprehensive approach in resilience planning where heritage is a structural component comprises the elaboration of physical, environmental, socio-cultural, socio-spatial, economic, knowledge-related and governance-related dimensions of cultural heritage together. Cultural heritage can, therefore, become a significant concern in resilience planning, with growing awareness at the individual, community and institutional levels.

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