

Conservation-Led Marginalization: Making Heritage in the Walled City of Lahore

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The emerging trajectory of conservation and urban revitalization in the Walled City of Lahore is indicative of its preference for tourism. The shift in the objectives of conservation towards utilizing cultural heritage as a capital resource for negotiating meanings, representations, power, and politics promotes conservation-led marginalization. This is not limited to physical dispossession in the innercity, but also involuntary social exclusion and the loss of access or restrictions on livelihood opportunities. The pattern of state-sanctioned attempts to render collective ownership of heritage capitalizes on the mediations with national and international institutions to authenticate their decisionmaking. The role of UNESCO as a status-defined marketing tool in lobbying the local heritage industry, as well as a source of global governance, is understated. The nature and conditions of 'heritage' conservation schemas require critical attention, while pivotal questions need to be addressed regarding its rhetorical deployment. The objective of the research is to explore the nature, scope, and effect of the multifaceted national and international institutional framework in the definition, production, consumption, and making of heritage.

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Displaced by Heritage - The notion that the Walled City of Lahore is increasingly characterized by decay is widespread. The popular accounts describe the dilapidating infrastructure, deteriorating building stock, traffic congestion, noise, and air pollution, visual clutter, and shortcomings in land management. The degenerative qualities are usually ascribed to the small-scale, labor-intensive enterprises and the development of local, regional, and national markets that thrive on inter-zonal and intra-zonal landuse linkages.

However, there is an underlying dichotomy between the authorities condemning the rapid commercialization and also actively reanimating the Walled City of Lahore as a market product, competing to attract tourism. This political behavior has instilled shock treatments in the inner-city, in the form of architectural cosmetics. This raises concerns regarding the disproportionate utilization of cultural heritage as cultural capital. The new transnational industry is also emergent to reap the economic value of the heritage resources, their management, and their design and place-branding.

The selective themes and identities coerced through masterplans and megaprojects present the risk of marginalization for the host community while negating their regional transformations. The dominant ideologies and the 'wealthy' imagery are disseminated to appeal to global imaginaries, with tourism as central to the organization and augmentation of a range of cultural identities. The present becomes a vessel for the selection of an imagined past, while what is found becomes reserved for an imagined future.

In the process, heritage management and the conservation efforts become visible as deliberate, goal-directed choices, dependent on the interpreter, the investor, and the audience

the heritage product is intended for. The research intends to highlight the use and misuse of heritage, which becomes a vessel for contested relations that interact at national and international levels. In developing tools for tourism, the most relevant cultural meanings and heritage images are implanted in the urban environment.

In the Walled City, the objective of planning to develop 'heritage' as an economic resource puts the conservation efforts in question; if tourism is an outcome of conservation or conservation is increasingly a product of tourism. The tourism sector has been widely recognized to sustain the heritage stock. However, when it disaffects the depth and dynamism of the heritage places in favor of wealth accumulation, it begins to prove detrimental to the physical fabric and the host community.

The attempts to blur the distinction can be successful with the use and abuse of international organizations such as UNESCO, which bring in prominent names. The attachment of the national policy and duty with foreign investors, international aid agencies, and guiding institutes to represent national culture for both national and international consumption can be perceived as institutional collusion.

The short-term nature of the political choices, aimed at quick and visible results, is embedded in long-term exclusionary results that are detrimental to the 'living' heritage of the Walled City of Lahore – found in both the indigenous specialized markets, its distinctive urban form, as well as its traditional social patterns and cultural norms.

